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J. R. Paul

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17.1.1966
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The Mountain Path

III
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J A Y A N T H I N U M B E R

January
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The Spiritual Journal
published from the Asramam

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स्थानं प्राप्य विराजते विनमतामज्ञानमुन्मूलयन् ।
पश्यन्विश्वमपीदमुल्लसति यो विश्वस्य पारे पर-
त्तस्मै श्रीरमणाय लोकगुरवे शोकस्य हन्त्रे नमः ॥

Salutations to Sri Ramana, the universal Master, the Dispeller of misery from the world, the One Who chases away the darkness of His devotees and displays Himself as the Eternal Consciousness inhering in the heart, blazing both within and without, bereft of the least trace of ignorance—the One who shines as the transcendental Truth underlying the world and beyond !

—KAVYAKANTA GANAPATI MUNI.

॥ नमः किञ्च एकस्मिन् त्रैलोक्ये ॥

— Kavyakavya Darsavati Muni —





THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

Editor : ARTHUR OSBORNE

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RAMANA SAT-GURU

[EDITORIAL]

He is now as he was. To many he said : "You are not the body." We see now that he was not the body. In his body's lifetime as now guidance came to all who turned to him, whether they could approach him physically or not ; now as in his body's lifetime it radiates with peculiar force from his Ashram at the foot of Arunachala.

"People say I am leaving," he said just before the body's death. "Where could I go ? I am here." Not "I shall be here" but "I am here". He is here in the eternal here and now ; he is here in each one's heart ; he is here also in his Ashram at Tiruvannamalai.

He inaugurated a new path independent of formal rites and initiation to suit the conditions of our age when true guidance is hard to find in any of the orthodox channels and when traditional forms of living do not fit into the pattern of life. It would have been a poor gift if it had been for his lifetime only. He is the Guru now as he was. Those many who never saw him in the body find his guidance no

less powerful than we who did. Therefore it is not necessary for any successor to give initiation in his name. The initiation was silent and formless, as it still is ; the guidance was straight to the heart, by-passing words and thought. Understanding is needed, and courage and devotion ; the path is there and the Guide to lead and support you to the Goal.

How can he perform the act of guiding aspirants if he has become one with Universal Being, theorists ask. He has not. He already was one with Universal Being. Every one is ; it is only a question of realizing it, and he had realized the Oneness before death already. He himself confirmed that there is no difference between Realization before death and after.

The Self is what you are, whether Muslim or Christian no less than Hindu. Therefore he turns people inwards to the self, to the quest of the Self, making no distinction between religions.

Books and scriptures teach that the quest must be undertaken and the ego dissolved. Once this has been understood, why study them interminably? Therefore he did not speak often or unprompted on theory. Did Christ or Buddha? About practice he spoke gladly.

Powers are useless, often an impediment. Any desire, even for powers that are considered higher, indicates that there is still some one who desires. It is that some one who is to be traced out and dissolved.

Only for our sake the Guru appears outwardly; he is the Self in the heart. But because the impure mind misinterprets messages, the instructions are received outwardly to be followed inwardly.

What is Ramana? When he joined in singing 'Ramana Sad-Guru' he pointed to his body and said: "Do you think this is Ramana?"

"In the recesses of the lotus-shaped heart of all, from Vishnu downwards, there shines the Absolute Consciousness which is the same as Arunachala or Ramana. When the mind melts with love of Him and reaches the inmost recess of the Heart where He dwells as the Beloved, the subtle eye of pure intellect opens and He reveals Himself as Pure Consciousness."¹

But how, it may be asked, is one to know that one has been taken up by Ramana Maharshi and become his disciple now that he is no longer here in the body to confirm it? The same problem existed in his lifetime also. He very seldom confirmed in words having given initiation.² It was to be understood. And then also there were some who failed to understand. As I explained in my last editorial, the time for rigid formalism, whether of initiation or of the path into which one is initiated, is past. The new trend required to meet the conditions of our times, did not, as I pointed out there, begin with the Maharshi. He brought it to completion but it started as far back as the 19th Century. Sai Baba, who lived at the

turn of the century,³ also gave no formal initiation. Sri Lahiri Mahasaya, who died in 1895,⁴ so simplified Kriya Yoga as to make it accessible to householders also and even to non-Hindus. In the Maharshi's lifetime, as now, his initiation came without ritual, whether through a potent, intense look or in a dream or some other way. Now as then people just know that the Maharshi is their Guru, that he has taken them up and that Grace flows to them from him.

And what then? People who turn to the path require some method, some discipline, some technique. It has been sufficiently explained in *The Mountain Path* that not all the Maharshi's disciples, even in his lifetime, followed the path of Self-enquiry. In particular, readers who wish for confirmation of this are referred to 'The Maharshi and the Path of Devotion' by A. Devaraja Mudaliar in our issue of October 1964 and 'A Chakra at Sri Ramanasramam' by Krishna Bhikshu in that of April 1965. His Grace supports his devotees on whatever path they follow, whether there be in it more of devotion or knowledge or action, whether fortified by ritual or not, whether within the framework of any religion or not. And if any change becomes advisable, if any forms or techniques or methods are outgrown and cease to be helpful, some indication will come. Guidance will not fail.

Having said this, however, the opposite side of the medal also should be shown. That is that the method which Bhagavan always recommended in the first place, which he spoke of as the most simple and direct and put first in all his teaching was Self-enquiry. It fol-

¹ From *The Collected Works of Sri Ramana Maharshi*, Rider & Co., England and Sri Ramanasramam, India.

² One such case is described on p. 73 of our issue of April 1964.

³ For whom see an article in our issue of July 1964. See also *The Incredible Sai Baba* by Arthur Osborne, published by Orient Longmans, Calcutta and Rider & Co., London.

⁴ For whom see our book review section of October 1965.

lows, therefore, that such of his devotees as can practise it should.

Some people have got a false idea that Self-enquiry is a coldly intellectual method. There is no such thing. Intellectual understanding may be helpful up to a point on one's quest, but it cannot be the quest. 'I am not this body ; I am not the thoughts' may be a useful preliminary to the enquiry but it cannot be the enquiry. The enquiry is not a mental investigation such as a psychologist might indulge in. It is not a probing into the faculties, urges, memories or tendencies of one's conscious or subconscious mind but a quest of the pure I-ness that lies behind all these.

It consists of turning the mind inwards to the sense of being, the feeling of 'I-am'. Therefore it is not verbal. 'Who am I?' is not a mantra. Its repetition might perhaps help to steady the mind in the early stages but can be of little use really. One hint that Bhagavan gave was that consciousness should not be centred in the head but in the spiritual heart at the right side of the chest, because it is not a question of thinking but of feeling and being. That does not mean thinking about the spiritual heart or meditating on it. When you want to see you don't think about your eyes, you just use them ; so also with the heart. It is not necessary to locate it exactly any more than it is to locate your eyes in a mirror before you can see with them. What is wanted is to have the experience, not to argue about it. This about the heart is only a hint, but a very useful one.

A man is made up of acting, thinking and being. Being underlies the other two because you can't act or think unless you first are ; but it is usually so covered over by them that it is not perceived. It can be compared to a cinema screen and they to the pictures projected on it. It is the screen that supports the pictures and yet it is so covered over by them that it is not perceived. Only very rarely, for a flash, one is aware of just being and feels it as pure, spontaneous, causeless happiness.

It is also pure, thought-free consciousness. The purpose of enquiry is to make one aware of being at will and for longer and longer periods.

This means that although the term 'meditation' is conventionally used for Self-enquiry, it is not meditation as the dictionary defines it. Meditation requires an object, something to meditate on, whereas in enquiry there is only the subject. You are not looking for anything new, anything outside yourself, but simply concentrating on being, on your self, on the pure 'I am' of you. It is not thinking but suspending thoughts while retaining consciousness.

Normally when you stop thinking you go to sleep ; and when one first begins enquiry the mind often does try to do so. An attack of overwhelming sleepiness comes over you ; but as soon as you stop the enquiry and turn to some other occupation of the mind it passes, thereby showing that it was not real tiredness but just an instinctive resistance to thought-free consciousness. One simply has to fight it.

Thoughts themselves are a far more persistent obstruction. They rush into the mind in an unending stream. You drive them out and others slip in from behind. You think you are free from these and before you notice you are indulging others. The only way is persistence. Constant alertness. Not to get carried away by thoughts. To see them aloofly like clouds passing over a clear sky and ask : 'What is this thought? Who did it come to? To me, but who am I?' And so you bring your mind back to enquiry. The mind is likened to a monkey rushing from tree to tree, ever restless, never content to be still. It has to be checked from its restlessness and held firmly to enquiry.

But it is not only the wandering nature of the mind and the unending succession of thoughts that is the obstruction ; it is also the ego-drive behind many of the thoughts. This gives them power and makes them far harder

to dispel. You may convince yourself doctrinally that there is no ego and have occasional brief glimpses of the being-consciousness which is unruffled happiness when the ego is in fact absent; but you are drawn to this girl or want to impress this friend or dominate this group; you resent this criticism or feel slighted by this person; you feel insecure in your job, cling to your possessions, hanker after money or power: and all of these are affirmations of the ego which you believe not to exist. So long as they exist, it does. If there is no ego who can feel anger or desire, resentment or frustration?

This means that enquiry is not merely a cold investigation but a battle. Every path is, in every religion. The ego, or apparent ego, has to be destroyed. That is the one essential common to all of them. The only difference is how to do it. There are paths which set you attacking the various vices individually — lust, arrogance and so on — and cultivating the opposing virtues; but Self-enquiry is more direct. Such methods are like lopping the branches off a tree: so long as the roots and trunk remain fresh ones will grow. Self-enquiry aims at uprooting the tree itself. If the ego is deprived of one outlet — say if it is forced to celibacy — others will develop — say gluttony or vanity. But if the ego itself is dissolved the vices in which it found expression will collapse like deflated balloons. But it is constant warfare until the ego really is dissolved.

This is what Self-enquiry is aiming at. It does not teach one any more theory or doctrine. It is quite possible to know all the doctrine that is necessary before you start — “Simply that being is and you are That”. What it does, after a certain amount of practice, is to bring increasingly frequent and lengthy experience of pure timeless being which is also pure awareness and unruffled happiness. This is not mental, and yet the mind is aware of it. It is not physical, and

yet it is felt physically as a vibration or a waveless calm. Once awakened it begins to appear spontaneously even when you are not ‘meditating’ or to subsist as an under-current to whatever you are doing, to the routine of life, while you are talking, even while thinking.

This is important with regard to method. It explains why Bhagavan preferred his devotees to follow the quest in the life of the world. Sitting daily in ‘meditation’ is useful, in most cases, indispensable; but it is not enough. So far as possible fixed times should be set aside for it, since the mind accustoms itself to them, just as it does with physical functions like eating and sleeping, and responds more readily. For people who are bound by professional and domestic obligations, just after waking in the morning and before going to sleep at night are excellent times. But apart from that Bhagavan would tell people to practise enquiry always, to ask themselves ‘Who is doing this?’ to engage in activity without the ‘I-am-the-doer’ illusion. Keeping up this attitude of mind throughout the day’s activities is equivalent to remaining alert, to welcoming the sense of being whenever it comes. Constant alertness and remembering is necessary when not ‘meditating’ no less than concentration when remembering. At first there will be frequent forgetting: that also has to be combated. The ‘current of awareness’ has to be cultivated and fostered. It is very seldom that there is achievement without effort.

This is the path that Bhagavan laid down. It is independent both of forms and doctrines. It requires no ritual. It can be followed invisibly by the housewife or shopkeeper no less than the monk or yogi. The Grace of Bhagavan is available to all who turn to him, but it is those who strive on this path that utilise it the most fully and the most wisely. It is an unfailing support and an inexhaustible treasure for them.

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

By DR. LT. COL. P. V. KARAMCHANDANI

Normally, as soon as I place my head on the pillow, I fall asleep. One night, in February 1949, at Vellore, for no conscious reason, I could not sleep and kept tossing in bed. That was something very unusual.

At 1 a.m. a telephone call came from Tiruvannamalai, a place 55 miles away, asking me to reach there by 8 a.m. as Bhagavan Ramana was very ill. Having received the call, I fell sound asleep.

I was the District Medical Officer of North Arcot then and Tiruvannamalai was within my jurisdiction. I reached Tiruvannamalai without any emotion. My only thought was that I was on a professional mission of attending on a patient. The sainthood of Bhagavan Ramana had no significance for me.

I examined Bhagavan Ramana. He had cancer of the main nerve, high up in the arm. I gave my prescription and returned to Vellore the same day.

I had conducted my examination of Bhagavan Ramana in a strictly professional manner. I carried no spiritual feelings for him. Nor did he speak a word with me. But he had directed a momentary gaze of grace at me which kept stirring me deeply. Involuntarily I felt a new vista of spiritual consciousness open out before me.

That wondrous gaze of Bhagavan seemed to envelop me with an aura of bliss. The spiritual pull from him felt so irresistible that after a few days I myself arranged a visit to Tiruvannamalai just for the sake of having his 'darshan.' I took my wife with me.



We visited Bhagavan with a sense of curiosity and an indefinable sense of expectation. We made our obeisance and sat by his feet. We did not speak a word; nor did he speak. No speech seemed necessary. So surcharged with spirituality was he, that his spirituality wafted out to us, completely enveloping us. Serenity seeped into us. Our minds attained a state of blissful, ecstatic meditation.

The tumour that Bhagavan was bearing must have given him the most excruciating, nerve-wracking pain. Such writhing pain would make the toughest man wince and moan. But Bhagavan's face was serene, smiling and radiant.

All of a sudden a disciple accidentally touched only the fringe of the thin bandage that was covering Bhagavan's tumour. Bhagavan gave an involuntary start. The disciple felt bewildered and mumbled, "Bhagavan, did I hurt you? It was only the fringe of the bandage that my hand touched." The Bhagavan smiled his benign smile and softly said, "You do not know the enormous weight as of a mountain that this fringe bears!"

That chance exclamation of Bhagavan indicated the severity of his pain. But his godly face did not bear the slightest sign of his agony. It reflected only joy and peace. He seemed

to have switched off his mind from the body to the divine.

The next occasion when I was summoned to Bhagavan's presence was when he had developed anuria. I now went to his Ashram not with the all-important feeling of a District Medical Officer going to visit his patient. I went in the spirit of a humble devotee going to serve a saint of colossal spiritual magnitude. My ministrations as a doctor were to be coupled with the devotion of a disciple.

When I reached the Ashram, I was told that for the past 24 hours Bhagavan had not taken any food, not even a drop of water; that the disciples' implorations in this behalf had failed; and that, in consequence, the entire community was feeling most anxious. I was entrusted to persuade Bhagavan to eat something.

On examining Bhagavan I found that it was imperative that he should take some fluid. But what if he refused my request too? Ordering him in my capacity as a doctor seemed to be out of question. I felt like asking him as a boon to accept my prayer. I prayed inwardly and held a glass of buttermilk before him. He gazed at me for a second, took the buttermilk in shaking hands, and drank it. My joy knew no bounds. There were relief and jubilation all around. I was thanked profusely. But I felt infinitely grateful for Bhagavan's overwhelming grace. He had heard my silent prayer and granted my boon.

Wonderful was the spiritual exhilaration I experienced in Bhagavan's holy presence.

The next time I was called to him was at midnight. When I entered his room, four disciples were there. Bhagavan was saying something to them in Tamil. They told me that he was asking them to leave the room, but that they wanted to stay as, according to them, he was in a delirium. I persuaded them to go. Three of them went away. The fourth one stayed on. Bhagavan turned to him and whispered, "You are not going away because

you feel that you love me more than the others!" The disciple now knew that Bhagavan was not delirious. He bowed and went.

I was left alone with Bhagavan. As usual, he did not speak with me. I was also silent. But the vibrations that emanated from him were celestial. His body must have been in terrific, mortal pain. But his heavenly spirituality was unaffected by it. A rapturous thrill electrified my entire being.

I administered to his body; but I was hardly conscious that I was a District Medical Officer. I was conscious only of an intense desire to worship this illumined soul. I had learnt that Bhagavan did not allow devotees to touch his feet. But I felt a deep urge within me not only to touch his blessed feet but to press them lovingly. I took courage in both my hands and pressed them. The wonder of wonders! Bhagavan let me do so! His grace was abounding. I considered myself in the seventh heaven. I glorify those few minutes of my life.

The next time I was summoned to him was about three hours after midnight. Pain must have been torturing his body. Still, he was sound asleep. Holy silence filled the room. It was the ambrosial hour of the dawn. I did not wish to disturb him. I sat quietly by his feet. Suddenly he opened his eyes. His gracious gaze fell on me. He softly muttered, "D.M.O.!" The peculiar tone in which he mentioned me indicated that I had been in his sacred thoughts and that he was expecting me. I felt myself blessed. I silently worshipped him. My whole being seemed to vibrate with ecstasy.

At that time I had been feeling restless about promotion to the rank of Major-General (Surgeon General), which was legitimately due to me as the senior-most I.M.S. Officer in the Province of Madras. Howsoever I tried to banish the idea of that coveted promotion from my mind, it loomed large before my mind's eye and marred my equanimity.

Then I said to myself, "Why am I fretting unnecessarily? The next time I visit Bhagavan, I shall request him to grant me this promotion!"

When I visited the Ashram again, I went before Bhagavan with my mind resolutely set on requesting him for that boon. But a marvel happened. As soon as I saw Bhagavan, my mind melted, the resolution evaporated, and I felt filled with strange contentment. A request did formulate itself within me, but it was an entirely different request. I inwardly prayed, "Bhagavan, free me from my craving for this promotion. I don't want anything mundane. Instead, grant me my soul's evolution." My prayer seemed to be instantly granted. Effulgent joy flooded the very depths of my being. I reverently bowed before Bhagavan and he gazed at me benevolently.

My last visit to Bhagavan was on the day he attained Nirvana. I have described it in my *Saintly Galaxy**: how, on visiting him, I

found that his body would not last beyond that day; how I silently prayed that he might retain his body till I brought my wife from Vellore as she had always been anxious to witness a great saint's last moments of life; how she brought orange juice for him; how he would not accept any drink at all; how, once again inwardly, I implored him to drink the orange juice to save my wife from deep disappointment; how he accepted my unspoken prayer and asked for orange juice, to the transcendental delight of my wife and myself; and how, shortly afterwards, in utter tranquillity, he passed on.

That was a scene of great sombre beauty.

During my two months' contact with Bhagavan, I did not speak a single word with him. But, what wonderful grace he poured into me through his benign, benevolent gaze!

A peerless spiritual experience indeed!

* Pp. 74-77. Published by Advani Press, Anand Nagar. Forjett Street, Bombay-26.

THE TEAR-DROPS IN MY EYES*

By G. H. MEES

There's little left, Bhagavan,
To offer Thee — too poor I am.
There's nothing left at all to give,
For all achievements vanish at Thy Feet,
And all things dwindle into nothingness.
There's one thing only that with faltering heart
I dare to offer Thee :
It is the tear-drops in my eyes
Which ever manifest themselves
In silent contemplation of Thy Grace.
They spring from Thee :
They are the Elixir of Bliss ;
Let them return to Thee,
Their Source, the Ocean of pure Love,
Outpouring of my heart.

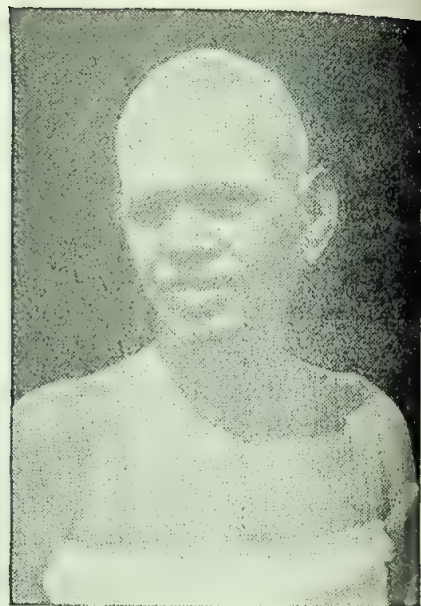
* From the Ashram Golden Jubilee Souvenir Volume.

A PERFECTIONIST

By PROF. G. V. SUBBARAMAYYA

At this time I was blessed with the rare good fortune of working with Sri Bhagavan in the kitchen. The hours of duty were between 2-30 and 4 a.m. every night. Sri Bhagavan would come punctually at 2-30 and first spend some time cutting up vegetables with workers and devotees. Then he would enter the kitchen and prepare the sambar or chutney for next day's lunch and occasionally for other dishes also. The Sub-Registrar R. Narayana Iyer, the Book-stall Manager Kalyana Sundaram Iyer and myself used to assist Sri Bhagavan. At first I was an ignoramus in the work. As I saw Sri Bhagavan perspiring profusely near the oven I tried to fan him ; but he objected. He would not allow any distinction being shown to him. I stopped but when he was engrossed in the work I gently repeated the fanning. Turning to me, he laughed and said : " You want to do it on the sly but you don't even know how to do it effectively. Let me teach you." So saying, he held my hand and taught me the proper way of waving the fan. Oh ! how I thrilled at his touch and thanked my ignorance !

From the kitchen we would adjourn to another room for grinding the mixture. There too I did not know at first how to hold the pestle and to grind. Sri Bhagavan placed his hand upon mine and turned the pestle in the proper way. Again what a thrill ! How blessed was my ignorance ! After the work was finished Sri Bhagavan would take a bit out from the dish, taste a little of it and give us the remainder to taste, and sometimes when our hands were unwashed he would himself throw it into our mouths with his own hand. That would be the climax of our happiness.



Then he would hasten back to the hall and lie reclining on the couch and appear to be dozing as the Brahmins arrived for the chanting of the Vedas. Squatting so close to Sri Bhagavan, chatting and joking with him, partaking of the fruit of his gracious labours — what a privilege and fortune ! That was indeed the most blessed period in the lives of us three. Its very recollection must thrill us throughout our lives.

But this work with Sri Bhagavan had its rigours as well as its pleasures. Though he was all mercy and grace, he was at the same time a strict disciplinarian. He would not tolerate the least sloppiness. Everything had to be done to perfection. Nothing was to be wasted or spoiled. He would demand full attention and implicit obedience to his directions. One night a devotee who was an advocate insisted on sharing in the work. He was asked to shift a vessel containing sambar, and while he was doing so a few drops were spilled. At once Sri Bhagavan flared up and said : " You are only fit for arguing in court. Such work is not for you." The poor man never again volunteered.

Each one of us was allotted a duty and had to take his cue from a mere glance by Sri Bhagavan. My duty, for instance, was to supply salt and water, and whenever Sri Bha-

gavan looked at me I had to bring one or the other, understanding which was needed. Usually we used to wake at 2 o'clock, finish our ablutions and be ready before time to report for duty. One night, however, I was five minutes late and the work was already going on. Tasting the preparation, Sri Bhagavan said that there was a little too much salt and, turning to me, he added : " Since you were absent I thought of you at the moment of adding salt and that is the reason for the excess." That was his way of reprimanding me for my unpunctuality.

On another occasion the sour ingredient was slightly excessive. Sri Bhagavan tasted it

and said jokingly : " Acidity is an effective remedy for giddiness and since most of those who come here are more or less giddy this preparation will do us a lot of good." But such slight errors were very rare. As all devotees and visitors would readily testify, the preparations were ordinarily of excellent taste.

While the work was going on, Sri Bhagavan had a way of teaching the highest wisdom through homely, casual remarks. For instance, once when the sambar was being boiled he observed : " It must be thoroughly boiled and all the effervescence must completely subside. Only then will it mature and acquire the right taste."

RAMANA SAT-GURU

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

To feel, to know, to be the Christ within —
Can there then be love for Christ on earth,
Walking like men, seen as a man is seen ?
Seek not to argue ; love has greater worth.
Love makes man kin

With the Beloved. Such have I known,
Him of the lustrous eyes, Him whose sole look
Pierced to the heart, wherein the seed was sown
Of wisdom deeper than in holy book,
Of truth alone

Not to be learned but lived, Truth in its hour
To sprout within the heart's dark, wintry earth
And grow a vibrant thing, then, come to power,
To slay the seeming self that gave it birth,
Or to devour.

Heart of my heart, seen outwardly as one
In human form, to draw my human love,
Lord Ramana, Guru, the risen Sun,
Self manifest, the guide of all who rove,
Lost and alone,

In tangled thoughts and vain imaginings,
Back to pure Being, which your radiant smile,
Full of compassion for my wanderings,
Tells me I always was, though lost this while
In a world of things.

SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN

By N. N. RAJAN

Being a householder, I felt that it was not right for me to follow a spiritual path alone, so I began taking my wife and children also to Bhagavan's Ashram. Within a few months I found, to my astonishment, quite a conspicuous change in my wife and noticed that she had outstripped me in her understanding of Bhagavan. She had become a greater devotee and was imbibing more peace from him. My children also enjoyed his presence and he used to laugh and joke with them. Indeed he had a special fondness for children and often used to joke with them and touch or caress them. He scrupulously avoided touching adults or being touched by them. The children themselves derived a certain peace and joy from his presence and would sometimes sit motionless before him, as though under a spell, free from childish wriggling.

I am not exaggerating when I say this. Once my daughter, who was only just over two, sat quietly by herself in a corner of the hall for about two hours, sitting cross-legged like adults and not even speaking. My wife and I did not notice this since we were absorbed in meditation, but the Maharshi did.

When I went there early next morning I was surprised and delighted to hear the Maharshi telling one of the devotees about it. "Rajan's little daughter Kutti was sitting cross-legged away from her parents for about two hours and she never stirred the whole time." He laughed in a pleased and surprised way and, as was his way when anything happened that particularly delighted him, he repeated the story over and over again as fresh devotees came in. Actually we say that things surprised him, but that is not strictly correct because in his dynamic presence even more remarkable things could happen.



It was delightful to hear him talking about it and to realize how closely he had watched her while we knew nothing about it. Of course, it was due to his Grace, as a child would not naturally act like that. She used to call him 'grandpa' and sometimes in answering her he would touch her head or pat her on the back. The touch of so exalted a Sage, especially on the head, must have been hasta-diksha and could not be without effect. He was omnipotent but was so unostentatious that he would never reveal his powers openly but behaved quite simply like an ordinary man.

He used to joke with my two sons also and would sometimes touch them. My second son was once offering some fruit and the Maharshi laughed and took hold of his hand. My elder son, who was then six years old, used to recite Sanskrit verses as prayers both in the Ashram and at home. If he said them too fast Bhagavan would tell him to go slowly; and when he recited them at home he would sometimes have a vision of Bhagavan and say to me: "Father, Bhagavan is telling me to go slowly." It was a wonderful experience to see my child gifted with such visions when I myself had no such experiences. The children are grown up now but all three still enjoy lasting benefits from the touch and blessings of Bhagavan.

RAMANA JAYANTHI

By K. LAKSHMANA SHARMA ('WHO')*

"The one Letter (Om) shines Inside the Heart eternally of Itself—how is It to be written?"

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA.

Ramana has no Jayanthi of His own, because He is the Unborn, Timeless Real Self in us. So what we call His Jayanthi is only our jayanthi—our Birth in Him, our Real Self. This birth is guaranteed to us, His sincere devotees, because He has looked on us with grace.

Ramana is the Formless, Timeless and Spaceless Arunachala who dances as the "I" in the Heart. He has graciously taken a form, that we may be relieved of the bondage of form. He is not a geographical entity but the Moveless Brahman of the Upanishads. Grace is His Essence, and out of grace He has become our Guru. Grace is not simply in Tiruvannamalai, but resides in our hearts. The Heart is the True Arunachala.

The might of His Grace is infinite, It is invincible: By His look we were caught in the net of His Grace, and It will accomplish Its work. There is no escape from It.

His Grace is like the unerring light of the sun. As it devours darkness, so Grace devours Ignorance and Unreality. We need do nothing at all, except to give our free consent that this work of Grace shall be accomplished.

To give our consent we must realise the truth about the work of Grace that it demands, in return for the gift of Ramana Himself, our own too much cherished, but wholly valueless false self, the ego, which makes us think and say, "I am so and so". We must ourselves



ardently desire to win Him by paying this seeming price and surrender this ego to Him.

This highly profitable bargain is to be won by Faith and Loyalty. We need to have faith in the teachings of Ramana. We have such Faith, since we know that Ramana is the same as Bhagavatpada Sri Shankaracharya and Sri Dakshinamurti, and that His words are the primary Upanishad, from which the ancient Upanishads themselves derive their authority. We do not go backward in time for our authority,—we find the needful authority in Ramana alone.

Though He tells us about the Quest of the Self by the Question "Who am I?", He also tells us that even now—without our making the Quest—"We are That" and that "That Itself is we". In other words we are Free by nature and always—that we are *Nitya-Muktas*. Bondage is unreal.

Hence our Jayanthi is not in the future, but now. All difference (including Bondage, Karma, etc.) is unreal.

He laughs at us for asking *how* we can become One with Him, saying it is like a man in Tiruvannamalai, asking the way to that very place.

* For whose obituary notice see our issue of July 1965.

Let Him laugh at us. For that laugh is full of grace, and will make us realise that we are He, and do not need to become He.

There is no room for discouragement, for remorse for our sins, or for fear of failure. For Grace alone exists, and it is He. If we do wrong, let us not weep for it, but forget it at once, and joyfully take Refuge in His Grace.

Must we do something, like the Squirrel at the Setu-Bandhan? Well, let us think of some of these truths of Ramana's Grace, and surrender our little selves to it, once or twice a day, when we fall asleep and when we awake. At other times, if Remembrance comes of its own accord, let us rejoice in it. If we fail often to stick to our programme, let us not waste thought in sinful regret, but go on with faith in His Grace.

WHY WE COME TO THEE, SAGE RAMANA*

By DILIP KUMAR ROY

Can we, Sage, ever give a name
To the Self that in our depths we want?
Can we, Fate's puppets, own to shame
Because we are so ignorant?

Not knowing of life's goal supreme,
We thrill in Vanity's displays,
With tongue deny the heart-lit Gleam!
When have fools worshipped Wisdom's ways?

In such an age of darkness Thou
Art come to meet us with Thy Light
Inscrutable — which is Thy plough
Wherewith Thou wilt disturb our Night

Of make-believes and vanities
And sow the seeds of truer Sight!
We say 'tis mad, yet bend our knees
To Thee, and, awed by Thy lone height,

We sing: "Truth wins to victory
Through aspiration's hopeless climb:
Life's din dissolves in harmony
Through disciplines which seldom rhyme

With Reason's feeble yes and no
Or weakling safety's whisperings;
Only strong faith can take in tow
The storm-tossed mind's imaginings."

* From the Ashram Golden Jubilee Souvenir Volume.

TIRUCHUZH - THE BIRTH PLACE OF SRI RAMANA

By N. N. RAJAN

Tiruchuzhi is an important place of pilgrimage (*kshetra*) from ancient days. The temple is noted for its antiquity and held in deep veneration. This place has become hallowed further, by being the birth place of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

It was here in 1879 that the celestial child Venkataraman was born as the son of Sri Sundaram Iyer and his devout wife Srimathi Alagammal. Sri Sundaram Iyer was an orthodox Brahmin of rare qualities and was working as a pleader, that is a country lawyer. His wife was equally pious and extremely generous. Sri Venkataraman was the second son in a family of three sons and one daughter.

Tiruchuzhi is a small town and administrative centre (taluk) in Ramanathapuram district in South India. It is about 38 miles from the large city of Madurai, and can be reached either by bus or car from there. It has recently been connected up with the railway line running from Manamadurai to Virudhunagar.

Legend has it that the town was named Tiruchuzhi because Lord Siva protected it from being submerged by making circular holes (*chuzhi*) in the land to serve as outlets for the waters to be drained out, when the whole world was inundated during the *Pralaya* (universal floods). The temple is well built in the style laid down by Hindu tradition and many centuries old. There are two separate chambers for the God and the Goddess and each is provided with an imposing tower. The inscriptions on the stones by the then Tamil rulers are still seen on the walls adjoining the



sanctum-sanctorum of both God and Goddess. This hoary temple was renovated and consecrated last in 1957 by the munificence of Sri Subramaniam Chettiar. The annual 'Adi-pooram' festival is celebrated there regularly during the month of 'Adi' (July-Aug.).

The presiding deity is Sri Bhuminatha and His consort is Sri Sahayavalli. Scriptures are replete with the description of the greatness of this place, as may be evident even from the various names given to the place as well as the Deities.

Tiruchuzhial, Punnaivanam, Avarthapuram, Trisulapuram, Kaleeswaram, Bhuvaneswaram etc.

The Lord is called — Bhuminathar, Bhumesar, Tirumeninathar, Bhuvanesar, Chuzhikesar etc.

The Goddess is called — Sahayavalli, Tunaimalai Amman, Muthumalai-Umayal etc.

It was visited by ancient Tamil saints famous for their devotion — Sri Appar, Sri Sundarar, Sri Manickavachagar and Sri Vageesar. They spontaneously poured forth beautiful classic Tamil songs, in this Temple in praise of the Lord and His Consort.

It is declared that there are nine sacred waters surrounding this Temple : Sulatheer-

tam, Papaharini, Kanvatheertam, Kalavatheertam, Koditheertam, Bhumitheertam, Amrithavavi, Brahmatheertam, and Trilochana-theertam.

Sri Bhuminatha is in the form of a Lingam symbolising Siva and it is said that He is worshipped here even by the celestials who are specially attracted by the place. The Lord confers considerable prosperity on those who visit this place, purging their sins and removing their miseries, besides granting them health, wealth and offspring. The return for any religious ceremonies, gifts, worship and sacrifices (*yajna*) done at this particular place increases a thousandfold. Such acts shower merit (*punya*) in abundance on individuals who perform them here. This place is compared to Kasi (Banaras) for its sanctity. All those who end their life here are said to attain Liberation, set free from the cycle of births and deaths. Brihathpala, one of the Pandya kings of the Lunar Dynasty, was absolved from his sin of killing a Brahmin simply by entering this town while seeking refuge.

The sacred river Koundinya which is named after Sage Koundinya, runs by the eastern side of the Temple, flowing north to south (*Dakshinavahini*). It is said that the holy river Ganges was specially brought here in the form of the Koundinya by Lord Siva as a boon in recognition of the austere penance performed by the Sage. The merit derived from a dip in this river is immeasurable.

Also there is a holy tank in front of the Temple. This is called Trisulatheertam as it was created by Lord Siva by a mere stroke of His weapon, the *Trisulam*. This is held

highly sacred as a bath in it washes away sins without leaving a trace.

Indeed it is said that the Goddess Ganges bathes in this tank every year on the full-moon day of the month of Masi (Feb.-March) and worships the Lord there. Even now it can be seen that during the waxing fortnight of the moon, just prior to this full-moon, the water in the tank rises gradually reaching the maximum on the full-moon day, after which it decreases gradually during the waning fortnight, to reach its previous level on the succeeding new-moon day.

Bhagavan Sri Ramana also often mentioned the greatness of this tank and spoke of this phenomenon. If any of the devotees happened to go to Tiruchuzhi at this time of year he would ask them specially to witness the changing level of the tank.

The house in Karthigai Street at Tiruchuzhi in which the child Venkataraman was born has been acquired by Sri Ramanasramam and is called "Sundara Mandiram". Daily pujas are regularly performed here for Bhagavan.

It should be strengthened without interfering with the original structure, to guard it against the ravages of time, as it attracts a great flow of visitors.

It may also be mentioned that the house at Madurai, where the boy Venkataraman was brought up during his school-days and where he had the supreme experience of Self-realization has been secured by Sri Ramanasramam. It is situated in Chokkappa Naicken Street and is called "Sri Ramana Mandiram". Here also daily pujas are performed for Bhagavan.

CORRECTION

Miss E. G. Blanchard informs us that she did not write 'The Sadhu's Prayer' published on p. 188 of our July issue but only sent it on to us. She does not know who is the author.

— Editor.

THE PERIYA PURANAM

By DR. DEVA SENAPATHI

Although Realization came to Sri Ramana Maharshi through a single act of Self-enquiry (as related by Prof. Nagaraja Rao in another article in this issue) it was preceded by a phase when premonitions of Divine Grace haunted him. Two influences awakened these premonitions in him. The first was a mention of Arunachala, the Holy Hill; the second was the Periya Puranam or 'Great Purana', a record of the famous Tamil Saivite Saints. As he read this he was filled with awe and wonder and a spirit of emulation.

Dr. Deva senapathi, Reader in Philosophy at Madras University, here gives us an account of this great compilation.

The Periya Puranam, known also as the Tiruttondar Puranam, gives an account of the lives of the devotees of Siva and of the devotees of His devotees. Indeed, to be a devotee of a devotee is considered an even greater privilege than to be His own devotee. Written by Sekkilar, the Periya Puranam is based on a number of verses in praise of devotees by Saint Sundarar and a slightly more detailed account of them by Nambiandar Nambi. It was compiled about 800 years ago and since that time has come to occupy a place of honour in Tamil literature and in the hearts of Saivites. One feels in reading it the sublimity of its theme, that is of a life of utter selflessness and devotion either to God or to His devotees. In fact, this succession of the Saints, differing in age, sex, learning, profession, social status, etc., is characterised by the one common feature of steadfast love for the Lord or His devotees.

This love finds expression in various ways — in simple but unflinching adherence to one's religious duties, in deeds of outstanding courage, or in normally impossible feats.

In contrast to such spectacular heroism, we have accounts of quiet but nonetheless profound love. For instance, Pusalar Nayanar wanted to build a temple but lacked the material means. Undaunted, he set to work to build it in his own mind. Collecting the materials, starting the work on an auspicious day,

proceeding methodically until the entire structure was completed, and all in his mind, he fixed a day for mentally opening it and installing the image of the Deity; then he found to his surprise that the Lord came rather to the opening of this mental temple of his than to one actually built by a king and to be opened on the same day.

Or there is the story of Vayilar of Mylapore whose worship, also inward, had even less form. "Installing the Deity in the temple of the mind by unceasing awareness of Him, lighting the lamp of Knowledge regarding relationship to Him, bathing the Deity in immortal bliss, offering love for the righteous to Him as food, he worshipped the Lord. By this worship which blossomed within him he devoted himself daily to the Lord with unflinching love."

It is usual to refer to the Tamil saints as sixty-three, but their number is not restricted to this figure. A phrase in Sundarar's verse refers to 'those beyond', and this is usually taken to mean others outside Tamilnad or from an earlier or later period than that covered by the Periya Puranam.

Sekkilar is aware of the difficulty of trying to describe the wellnigh inexpressible greatness of the saints. Paradoxically, this is the greatness of the 'lowly'. The Tamil word, adiyar, means those at the feet of the Lord.

¹ A translation of this story follows.—Editor.

They efface themselves so completely at his feet that the Lord makes the world recognize them as 'chiefs' or Nayanmars. Their greatness lies in realizing that their life centres in God, not in themselves.

Sekkilar says : "I shall sing the praises of countless devotees whose greatness is immeasurable. While even to indicate the limit of their praise is difficult ; impelled by boundless desire, I shall state their greatness." The Tamil word 'alairla', literally meaning measureless or limitless, is variously rendered here as 'countless', 'immeasurable' and 'boundless' to suit the context. It is perhaps deliberately repeated by the author to indicate the infinitude of the theme. What inspires devotion is the Infinite ; the love or devotion that is inspired is also infinite. In fact they seek to match the infinitude of the Lord by the infinitude of their love or devotion. Finitude of individual being is overcome by infinitude of love.

Here is a passage describing the qualities common to them all, notwithstanding the rich

variety of their personality. "Like the white sacred ash which adorned their bodies, they were pure within also. By their effulgence they illumined all places and they were great beyond the praise of words. Even were the elements to deviate from their nature, these would never forget the feet of the Lord. They pursued the path of steadfast love. They were great as a mountain in the loftiness of their blameless character. Their wealth was beyond the vicissitudes of prosperity and adversity, a piece of gold and a potsherd being alike to them. They worshipped because of the love that surged in them. So firm was their love that they cared not even for Liberation. Their ornament was a rosary, their costume rags. What weighed with them was the Lord's will ; nothing else mattered. Actuated by love that was an eternal spring in them, they lacked nothing. Is their heroism such as I can express ? All that I can do is to laud their exalted state. Their ancient glory continues without failing. How can I set it forth with due understanding ?"

COMPLETE YOUR WORK !

By A. RAO

Bhagavan, was it not you
Who gave these rhymes to me —
My mind the lens they filtered through,
Beautiful to see ?

And shall they now stay hid
To lighten no man's way,
A lamp beneath an iron lid,
A prayer with none to pray ?

Complete your work, Bhagavan !
Let them shine forth clear,
A light held high for every man,
To guide men to you here.

That Shankara (Lord Siva) who appeared as
Dakshinamurthi (seated under the Banyan tree)
to grant peace to the Great Ascetics (Sanaka,
Sanandana, Sanat Kumara and Sanat Sujata),
who revealed his real state of Silence . . . abides
in me.

—BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.

That the first person who appeared in
the morning, and entered the Banyan tree
to give place to the Great Ancestress (Pannak)
I would not have known, and I am not
certain of his name, but he is called
the first.

- The second person who appeared



POOSALAR

In Tinnanur, an ancient town in Tondai district, there dwelt a Brahmin, Poosalar by name. His mind for ever fixed on Siva's feet, he grew in love and learning day by day and spent his all in service to His devotees.

Wishing to build a temple to the Lord, he tried to raise funds. But try as he might, he failed. In grief he pondered, "What shall I do?" He resolved at last to raise within his heart a temple to his Lord. From far and near he fetched in fancy, little by little, stone and metal and other building material. Skilled masons and sculptors too he engaged and instructed in thought. And at an auspicious hour, he dug the ground and laid the foundation stone. Devoted, busy, sleepless even by night, he watched the temple grow, part by part and layer by layer, gateway, tower and central shrine, all planned according to the rules of Agama, and wrought in detail with minutest care. On top of the domed turret over the holy of holies he installed a stone a cubit long. And so with hard, steady effort of the mind, he completed the structure, plastered chinks with lime; dug wells and tanks, put up the outer walls; and fixed in his mind the auspicious day and hour for consecrating the shrine and installing the Presence.

The Pallava King had built in the city of Kanchi a mighty granite temple and appointed a day for the grand ceremony of its consecration. But, on the night preceding, the Lord appeared to the King in his dream and said,

"Poosalar, my friend, has laboured lovingly for many months and raised a temple for me in his mind, and I must be there tomorrow at its consecration. So you postpone your temple ceremony to some later day."

The King awoke, eager to visit Tinnanur and greet this favoured servant of the Lord. He reached the place and enquired of the people, "Whereabouts is this temple built by Poosalar?" But they all said, "We know of no such temple." Then he sent for the leading Brahmins of the town and asked them, "Who is this pure and perfect man, this Poosalar?" They answered, "A Brahmin of that name does dwell in this town. We shall go and bring him, Sire." But the King would have none of it. Instead he went himself to the man's house and, falling at his feet, asked, "Where is your famed temple? Today, I know, the Lord comes there to dwell. And at His bidding I too have come, to meet you and greet you on this day."

Staggered by this speech, the Brahmin said, "If the Lord pleases, the world shall know," and told the King the story of the building of the temple thought by thought. The King heard it all, fell again at the good man's feet, and marched back to Kanchi, accompanied by his army with drums and trumpets.

Poosalar through many seasons performed the daily pujas in his ideal temple at the due times in the prescribed manner and in the end attained the Feet of the Lord.

I had the opportunity of seeing Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi on a few occasions. He seemed to me to be the most authentic saint in our tradition. He kindled the spark of spirit in many people and helped many to attain the spiritual mysticism.

— DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN,
President of India.

LORD RAMANA COME

Translation of a Tamil poem written years ago by a devotee
who had the Grace of Ramana.¹

Dawn is rising on the Hill,
Sweet Ramana, come !
Lord Arunachala, come !

In the bush the koel sings,
Dear Master Ramana, come !
Lord of Knowledge, come !

The conch blows, the stars are dim,
Sweet Ramana, come !
Lord God of Gods, come !

The cocks crow, the birds chirp.
It is already time, come !
The night has fled, come !

The trumpets blow, the drums beat,
Gold-bright Ramana, come !
Knowledge Awake, come !

The crows caw, it is morn,
Snake-decked Lord, come !²
Blue-throated Lord, come !²

Ignorance is fled, the lotuses³ open,
Wise Lord Ramana, come !
Crown of the Vedas, come !

Unstained by qualities, Lord of Liberation,
Gracious Ramana, come !
Lord Peace, come !

Sage and Lord,
One with Being-Knowledge-Bliss,
Lord dancing in joy,² come !

Love on the summit of Knowledge,
Past pleasure, past pain, come !
Blissful Silence, come !

¹ From *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*, pp. 108-9, by Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co.

² An epithet of Siva.

³ This implies also 'the hearts'.

EARLY DAYS WITH BHAGAVAN

By G. RAMASWAMI PILLAI

From boyhood I was spiritually inclined. Although coming of a meat-eating family, I turned vegetarian while still a boy. I was mainly a worshipper of Siva but learned about Christ and Buddha too and revered them. Twice I visited the great Muslim shrine at Nagore and I understood that Allah was only another name for God. My one ambition in life was to see God face to face. This was granted to me while still a schoolboy, in March 1917, when I first went to Skandashram and set eyes on Bhagavan. Reclining on the couch, he looked indescribably majestic. Since then he has been God in human form for me, my God, Guru and All.

I did not ask for anything. I was filled to overflowing by just seeing him. He turned on me that look of heart-melting Grace that he so often bestowed on newcomers. After a few days I had to return home. There I learnt the *Marital Garland of Letters* and spent my time reciting it either mentally or aloud and even writing it out.

After finishing school I went to college. Then I returned to my village and although I had no desire for married life my parents got me married. I had no children, however, and was soon able to give up married life and go and live with Bhagavan at his Ashram.

* * *

Bhagavan had lived in various caves and temples, but Skandashram was the first to be known as an Ashram. He stayed there for seven years with his mother, his younger brother Niranjanananda Swami, who was to be the future Sarvadhikari, and a few sadhus. It



was here that ashram cooking was first started. This was due to the presence of his Mother. It was her presence that made it into an ashram. After her death Bhagavan abandoned it and went to live beside her shrine at the foot of the Hill, where the present Ashram has grown up. This shows her to have had greater importance than commonly supposed.

During his years at Skandashram Bhagavan still spoke little and seldom. It did not matter; his gaze was dynamic, penetrating, gracious, soul-stirring, ego-killing. In later years he spoke far more but his silences were still tremendous.

It was on my second visit to Skandashram that I first made pradakshina. A visitor from Madurai whom I knew wanted to go round the hill with Bhagavan and I joined them. At that time the lower slopes were still forested and we took the forest path for a good part of the way before coming out on the road. Next day I had a sudden urge to go round by myself. I started out as before but soon lost my way on the forest track. As I started I had noticed that one of the Ashram dogs was following me. Now it ran in front and began to lead. At once it flashed on me that this was Bhagavan's work. With tears of gratitude and joy I followed my guide. He

took me by the same path as the previous day until we came to the road and then disappeared; and I saw him at the Ashram when I got back. At the time I told nobody about this. It was my first experience of my spiritual relationship with Bhagavan and I was more than ever convinced that he would guide me through the unknown paths of life. Such an incident may appear trivial to the reader, but when it actually happens it strengthens one's faith in Bhagavan who alone can help one by his infinite Grace in opening one's inner vision.

* * *

For a whole year at Skandashram Bhagavan took only one meagre meal a day. I was on a visit there the day he broke this fast. I had decided to stay the night even though there was no food for an evening meal even for the rest of us. I didn't feel hungry. At about 7-30 one of the devotees, Ramanatha Brahmachari, came back with some pieces of broken coconut and some rice that he had been given at a ceremony he had attended in town. Bhagavan suggested that we should boil it up on the charcoal stove we had there and share it out, as was the usual custom. He told us to see whether there was any sugar or sugar candy left from gifts by earlier visitors to flavour it with. We looked but there was nothing at all. It was dark and raining outside and we could not well go into town for anything. I was near to tears that Bhagavan should ask for something — so rare an event — and we should not be able to provide it. At that very moment the door opened and two students came in with a bag of sugar candy and a bunch of bananas that they had brought to present to Bhagavan. The meal was cooked and eaten, the two visitors also being invited. Bhagavan remarked that we had asked for sugar candy and got bananas also, which could be cut up and served like a pickle with the food. After eating he said that it was just a year, 365 days exactly, since he had limited himself to one meal a day and that from now

on he would eat in the evening also. That was how things happened with Bhagavan. He did not work miracles; things just happened right. Miracles are generally thought of as deliberate acts willed by a person, but happenings like this are the result of spiritual forces already and always at work. The Jnani is God Himself in human form. He never wills anything but things happen in his presence and the ignorant attribute them to him. His state is pure awareness. It is a matter of experience. One may get a glimpse of it in his presence.

* * *

It was in 1922, when the present Ashram at the foot of the hill first started, that I became a permanent resident. At first there was only a thatched hut over the Mother's shrine and a second small hut that served as a kitchen. There were only a few of us then. There were no Ashram servants in those days; we did all the work ourselves, and Bhagavan along with us. Puja was performed twice a day, as it still is. We spent our time doing Ashram work, chanting sacred songs, walking round the hill, meditating and reading spiritual books. Earlier Bhagavan had been more silent and aloof; later, when crowds began to come, he was necessarily more distant, but at this time he took part in everything, guiding and helping in every activity of the growing Ashram. He was our Lord and Guru and was always with us. Devotees used to bring us provisions when they were needed and we never felt any want. We used to share things out as they came. Sometimes there was even more than we could dispose of on the spot. We even used to make tea and coffee when the ingredients were available.

Though this was an idyllic state in itself, the essence of it was our striving for Realization. Having attained a human birth, that is the only goal worth aiming at, for it is unalloyed, eternal Bliss and Peace.

* * *

We can dwell on the name or form of Ramana or neither. Repeating the name 'Ramana' inwardly is itself a good sadhana for those who do not use Self-enquiry. Or by concentrating on him intensely and constantly we may find in him the fire of Knowledge which will burn up our ego and convert us into him so that we realize our identity with him who is the Self of the Self. The state of bliss thus attained through merging into the Guru is called Guru Turiya. It is a matter for experience and cannot be explained in words.

The ego is only an accretion, a shadow, a ghost, an unstable outcome of the combination of chit and jada, consciousness and matter. It is the source of all mischief in our state of ignorance. Nothing is lost by its destruction. It obscures and conceals the true self of us which is identical with pure Consciousness. This false ego is to be dissolved by steady enquiry into it or by the Grace of our most gracious Sat-Guru Bhagavan Sri Ramana.

THE MAGICIAN RAMANA

(Three Stanzas from Muruganar's '*Suttaruttal*' translated by
PROF. K. SWAMINATHAN)

Awareness wherein brightly shine
These many forms of persons, places, time,
All separate-seeming though in substance One :
Into that same Awareness he transmuted
This 'I' of mine. Now, nothing to be known,
My past undone, my being his,
I stand, unruffled Bliss,
Untouched by any shock.
Lord Siva-Venkatesa he who,
King of kings, came conquering
And made me his alone.

What is this 'I' that rises from within ?
Only a thought that, like a bubble, floats
Up to the troubled surface of Awareness.
In sleep the sea is still, no bubble rises :
Then too you are.
You're not the 'I' that rises and then sets,
You are the sole Awareness in the All,
The eternal, uncreated Light of Being.

No form or feature has he of his own,
Yet form and feature to all beings gives ;
Knowledge and ignorance, both to him unknown,
Each human mind from him alone derives.
He brought me into being but to think
Of him as 'you', of me and mine as 'yours' ;
And he has left me wordless, deedless, prone,
Helpless on death's brink.
Only the vast beatitude endures.

COMPANIONSHIP WITH BHAGAVAN

By VISVANATHAN



Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni,¹ the well-known early disciple of Bhagavan Ramana, familiarly known as Nayana, once lived for four months in a small tiled room facing the Ganapati Temple of Palakothu² in the year 1929. I had the rare privilege of sharing his room and serving him, immersed in the spiritual aura of that great tapasvin and yogi. He was a very simple man with few physical wants, so it was a pleasure to serve him. It involved no physical or mental strain at all. Having a natural inner poise, he was always relaxed, despite his brilliance and quick wit. Every one felt the warmth of his friendliness and the air of purity and peace about him.

It was no wonder therefore that Bhagavan Ramana, despite his equal vision, had some special regard and love for him. This expressed itself in many ways. During these early years Bhagavan used to go alone, without an attendant, for his short afternoon stroll past Palakothu and often dropped in to sit for a few minutes with Nayana. It was neither what Bhagavan did nor what he said that mattered, it was his glorious presence that shone above all. Yet the familiarity with which he moved with his intimate devotees was heart-warming.

Bhagavan was opposed to any sort of waste or extravagance. "How do you light the fire in your charcoal stove?" he asked me one day. I told him that I used a bit of old rag rolled up and dipped in kerosene. Smilingly he scolded me for wasting kerosene when the fire could easily be lit with some of the dry twigs and leaves lying around or with bits of waste paper.

On another occasion he saw some small bits of paper, about one inch by six, lying on

the floor of Nayana's room and asked him if they were of any use to him. Nayana replied that they were waste pieces that he had cut off in cutting some sheets of paper to the required size. Bhagavan said: "I can stitch these pieces together and make a little note-book the size of a thumb and use it for writing something or other in." Nayana beamed with pleasure at this economy; but I, to save Bhagavan the trouble, offered to do it myself and to make use of the paper. Perceiving my motive, Bhagavan said: "All right, but you are to show me the stitched note-book and the use you make of it." On my undertaking to do so Bhagavan dropped the matter, as he had confidence in my sincerity.

As soon as Bhagavan had left I made a tiny note-book out of the bits of paper and wrote down in it the 108 slokas of the Indra Sahasra Nama Stotra and its seven concluding verses composed by Ganapati Muni in 1929.³

¹ For an article on whom see our issue of April 1965.—Editor.

² The wooded ground immediately west of the Ashram where a number of sadhus later established a colony. It was Ganapati Muni who was the first to settle there.

³ The thousand names of Indra culled from the Rig Veda. Nayana composed his litany of these, adding no other words. 'Indra' refers here, of course, to the Supreme Being, not to the Indra of the Puranas who rises to a godly state by merit and again falls from it.

Bhagavan appreciated the deep spiritual significance of these names as they were read out to him during the composition of the work and even before. So next morning when I showed Bhagavan the tiny note-book with the Indra Sahasra Nama written in it in small script he scrutinized, as was his way,⁴ not only the contents but the stitching and general appearance as well and then exclaimed with pleasure : " You have kept your promise and made the best use of the bits of paper." I somehow lost that precious note-book handled and perused by Bhagavan. I need not say how glad I shall be if this lost treasure is found and restored for the benefit of all.

The present Ashram buildings had not yet been erected and Bhagavan was living in a thatched hut adjoining his Mother's samadhi (shrine). Nayana used to sit in the presence of Bhagavan for about two hours daily, before and after sunset. This is a part of the day known as pradosha in Sanskrit and traditionally held sacred to the worship of Siva. But for Bhagavan and Nayana there was no special time of worship since they were perpetually flaming with tapas transcending time and space.

One evening Nayana asked Bhagavan about the forests which at that time still existed on and around Arunachala, saying that he had been in forests in other parts of India but not here. Bhagavan, full of benevolence, at once offered to take him to the forests on a fine day and said with a radiant, almost boyish smile, "Nayana, there is no inch of ground all over Arunachala that has not been trodden by these feet during the time when I was living on the hill, especially during the Virupaksha period. I have been up the hills and down the dales and roamed about the interior regions where no forest guard would dare to go."

One cloudy day, a few days later, I went to Bhagavan after lunch as usual. He was sitting alone. As soon as he saw me he asked what Nayana was doing and whether it would

suit him to go for a walk in the forest. I replied that Nayana was writing something but would jump with joy and gladly drop it if he heard of Bhagavan's proposal. "Go and tell him, then, and be ready," Bhagavan said. "I will slip out of the Ashram unobserved (to avoid a crowd) and meet you near your room."

Bhagavan joined us a few minutes later and the three of us wended our way towards the forest, led of course by Bhagavan, the born leader through uncharted regions, physical as well as spiritual. We entered the second forest path, cutting through the cattle-fair ground west of Palakothu and the beautiful little temple of Draupadi with an arresting atmosphere about it. Thence Bhagavan took us to the third forest path, skirting the slopes of Arunachala at varying heights. It was dense forest with creepers entwining the trees and bushes. There were a few streams, some of them flowing and some dried up. As we proceeded along the winding, rugged path, enjoying the beauty of the scenery and the ever-changing aspects of changeless Arunachala, the clouds cleared away and let the sunlight in for a few minutes. Knowing that Nayana could not stand the heat of the sun on his head, Bhagavan took us to a spreading tree standing at the edge of a forest pond and said : "See, Nayana, this is the tree known as Ingudi famous for its cooling shade and medicinal properties described in Sakuntala and other famous Sanskrit works. It is called Nilali in Tamil on account of its very cool shade which wards off the effects of the hot sun in no time." And five minutes under the shade of the tree proved it to be so.

As soon as the clouds gathered over again, giving shade, Bhagavan took us deeper into the forest. Later he found a very pleasant place for us to rest, on the bed of a dried up stream, shaded by a huge rock to the west.

⁴ Bhagavan was extremely observant. Even on receiving a letter he would examine the envelope with address, postmark and stamps before opening it.

We did not speak much. One does not feel like disturbing the eloquent silence of Bhagavan in harmony with nature by indiscreet talk or even thought. He teaches in silence.

Time passed unnoticed in the gripping presence of the Lord of Silence until Nayana suggested that it was getting rather late for Bhagavan's return to the Ashram. Bhagavan said that we would wait for the afternoon breeze which would soon start up and make walking pleasant. A few minutes later the breeze did indeed start. At the same time we heard the sound of some one moving through the bushes to the south and looking that way I saw Muruganar's⁵ head above the bushes and announced his presence with surprise. Bhagavan, who was a marvellous actor, placed his finger along the side of his nose, as was his habit when surprised, and expressed his surprise that Muruganar could have penetrated so deep into the forest and discovered us. Muruganar had by this time caught sight of us and heard our voices, and a few minutes later he joined us and prostrated full length before Bhagavan, his face flushed with emotion. Bhagavan asked him however he had managed to find us out in this unfrequented spot where even a forest guard would find it hard to do so.

Muruganar explained in a voice choked with emotion that he was present when Nayana expressed his wish to see the forests and Bhagavan proposed a walk there and he decided not to miss the opportunity of accompanying Bhagavan deep into the heart of Arunachala. So since that day he had been daily coming to the Ashram as early as possible in the afternoon from the Temple of Arunachala where he was staying. That afternoon he had not found Bhagavan seated on his couch as usual when he came. The people at the Ashram had no knowledge of his whereabouts. Wasting no more time, he went straight to Nayana's room in Palakothu but found it locked. He enquired of the watchman who told him that earlier in the afternoon Nayana and I had been seen walking with Bhagavan in the direction of the cattle-fair ground. Some intuition made him choose the path he did, which brought him straight to Bhagavan.

We all three returned with Bhagavan to the Ashram unaware of anything but Bhagavan's Grace, the only Reality shining through all forms and movements and playing hide-and-seek with us all.

⁵ For an introduction to whom see our issue of October 1964.—*Editor*.

The Maharshi was asked by some one whether the belief in the necessity of a Guru is correct. He gave the following reply: "So long as one thinks of himself as little (*laghu*) he must take hold of the great (*Guru*); he must not, however, look upon the Guru as a person; the Sage is none other than the real Self of the disciple. When that Self is realized then there is neither Guru nor disciple." The question arose because the Sage himself had had no Guru—at least no outer Guru. On another occasion the Sage said: "A teacher would be needed if one had to learn something new, but this is a case of unlearning."

—DR. C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR,
Vice-Chancellor of Annamalai University.
—Golden Jubilee Souvenir of 1946.

THE MAHARSHI AND HEALING

By DR. T. N. KRISHNASWAMI

Some aspirants have asked what was the Maharshi's attitude to spiritual healing and why he did not actively encourage it. In this article Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami delves into this difficult question.

Some people hold that spiritual healing should be practised as a part of sadhana. Spiritual healing is a process by which power from a higher level is invoked to descend and help at the lower, human level. The higher is not reluctant to respond to the lower but many difficulties stand in the way of the lower coming in touch with the higher. Prayer should be from the highest state of consciousness possible to us. Christ said: "When thou prayest enter into thine inner chamber and, having shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret and this Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

But if a man can purify himself utterly of self-will he becomes One with the Father, that is a Jivan-Mukta. Then his very presence is the greatest good and greatest balm to all human suffering. Miraculous cures may result from the outflow of healing grace from him. If a sick man makes himself a recipient of this grace by his faith he gets cured, but the cure is natural and spontaneous and not the result of any purpose or intention on the part of the Master.

But what of healing by one who has not attained this supreme level? Can he influence God as an advocate influences a judge? If God is Spirit or Consciousness no one can influence It or make It do anything for any one. What is it that heals and how is one to influence it? Bhagavan did not encourage pondering over such problems. They are of no



help for spiritual progress. One should concern oneself with the Self alone. Whether the body is sick or well there is the same 'I'. One should experience the 'I' which is in every one and is the same in every one.

This does not mean that Bhagavan was indifferent to the sufferings of those around him. He was supremely compassionate. Once a lady devotee brought the news of the death of her only daughter and on hearing it Bhagavan wept along with her. The Buddha advocated contemplation of suffering and its causes as the way to escape from it. Suffering is the prime problem of existence, but the earth-bound mind cannot comprehend the spiritual. To draw conclusions about God from what we see on earth is entirely wrong. The earth-bound mind may think of the external world as a theatre for divine vengeance and wonder what can be done to pacify the anger of God; but God neither punishes nor rewards and cannot be influenced.

It is the very nature of the mind to create mysteries and be baffled by them. Bhagavan warns us against seeking a remedy in the outside world. There is no peace to be gained in it. Our concern is with the Spirit which is within.

The body, being made up of matter, cannot suffer. Neither can suffering touch the Self,

which is Spirit. What is there between the two which suffers? This question takes us in search of something within us which is eternally young, beyond time and ever free but which is at present obscured. One should set aside some time daily in which to be separate from oneself and the outside world and abide in God. "If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you." The panacea for all the ills of the world is to stop being an individual and be one with God. Bhagavan said that the primary disease, the root of all other diseases, is ignorance of the Self. When asked to cure his own body at the end he said, "The body itself is a disease." The root symptoms of disease are body-consciousness and world-consciousness. One should try to heal this main disease rather than the lesser diseases from which the body suffers. The cause of suffering is ignorance of the real nature of the world and the inevitable evil of coming in contact with it. One is advised to shun the world by diving into oneself. The relation between body-consciousness and world-consciousness produces suffering. We use the body to keep up contact with the world, unaware of the painful consequences of such contact.

One should not be encouraged to seek the small solaces of this world as if they were the things of God. All experiences — birth and death, health and sickness, good and evil — are equally manifestations of one mind and are on the same level of reality or unreality as the mind. The world, the sorrows thereof, the compassion which seeks to relieve such sorrows are all dream experiences of a sleeping mind. When there is awakening everything vanishes, including the person who felt compassion in the dream.

One should use the manifestations of God to guide one to their Source. To study them in themselves is only to increase one's perplexities and to get involved in them.

Once a devotee who had strong faith in the Maharshi brought the corpse of her only child right into the hall where he was sitting. He asked what it was. She said: "My dead son, and I pray and beseech you to grant him life." The Maharshi sat silent for awhile, as was his custom, and then gently said: "Please remove the body to a nearby cottage and let us see what happens in the morning." Nothing happened and the boy lay dead. But something happened to the minds of the relatives and they removed the corpse and cremated it, realizing that they should not expect the dead to rise. The Maharshi later remarked that even an incarnate God cannot raise all the dead. He has no individual will so he cannot decide to perform such and such a miracle. If miracles happen in his ambience he witnesses them; that is all.

God radiates his grace throughout the universe irrespective of whether beneficiaries are there to receive it or not, like the sun its light. God's grace cannot be stopped. Bhagavan said that the very existence of a Jivan Mukta is the greatest blessing to the world.

Spiritual practice aims at helping human awareness to realize its identity with universal awareness. Identification with the body, whether healthy or diseased, is a result of misuse of the mind. Subject to this misuse a man seeks a comfortable body and a comfortable life. If we are concerned with maintaining and using this body to keep in touch with the world we are thereby perpetuating suffering. The compassion of the Enlightened One goes beyond pity for the ills the body is heir to and has rather pity for that false identification with the body which makes these ills inevitable. A jaundiced eye sees everything yellow; the split mind sees God's hand where it is not. The amount of pain and poverty in the world has made men doubt if there is a God at all. The omnipresence of God cannot co-exist with the miseries and ills that surround us. God's will is not being done in this world. Man's

will has kept God out. So one should not search for God in the world but inwardly. Where the ego is present no good or God can be present. Where the ego is absent no evil or want can be present. The body that is emptied of ego becomes the shrine of God and manifests His omnipresence and omnipotence. Such was the Divine state in which Bhagavan lived and moved among us. He proved this possibility, that a man can be one with God. Out-turned mind is bound to see the world and its sorrows; the in-turned mind is still. This stillness is the Spirit.

The purpose of this article is not to argue for or against spiritual healing but only to show

both possibilities, both viewpoints. Jesus healed the sick and said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." This showed that two things were necessary and had to conjoin: the grace flowing through the Master and faith on the part of the recipient. In the Maharshi's life healing played little part.¹ The world is as it is because men have desired such a world, not because God created it this way. The Maharshi's teaching is totally directed towards leading us out of such a world to the Source of the 'I' by intensely raising the question 'Who am I?'

¹ though certain cases of healing will be recorded in our next issue.—*Editor*.

HOW HE CAME TO SEE ME

By GURDIAL MALLIK

Yes, it was He who came to me, out of his abounding Grace. I had not then even heard his name, let alone anything about his abidance in the Being and Wisdom of the Eternal. It happened this way. Nearly thirty-five years ago I volunteered to work for a short time under the officiating editor of *The Theosophist* of Adyar, Madras. On one occasion he gave me a few books to review for it and among them a small booklet entitled 'Who am I?' As I read this I became more and more absorbed in what it had to say about Self-enquiry as a means to Realization. After I had put it aside a feeling of deep peace and bliss enfolded me like the arms of a mother, and I remained in this state for quite some time. When I finally came out of this exalted state I seemed to see with my inward eye a radiant face with starry gaze. And I bowed spontaneously before it in heartfelt reverence.

After this experience I resolved to use the enquiry every day. I continued to do so for many months. This enhanced by eagerness to touch the feet of the mighty Guru. But alas, I never found an occasion while he was among us in bodily form. When at last an opportunity to visit his Ashram did come in April 1950 the visible had already entered the Invisible.

Some years later, by God's Grace, I went on a pilgrimage to the shrine of this Great One. Once again the radiant face which had shone on me some three decades before gladdened my inward eye and I felt blessed to the very depths of my being. Also, by the Guru's benediction, a glimpse of the Self that is at the heart of Life was vouchsafed to me.

My salutations of love and reverence to the Self of the Guru and the Guru of the Self.

THE RESTORER OF ADVAITA

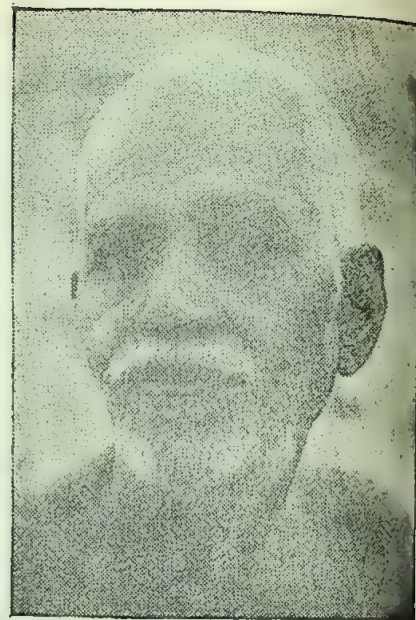
By PROF. NAGARAJA RAO

Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi renewed the Advaitic tradition of Sri Shankara. After a long ascendancy of the Bhakti cult he resuscitated the primacy of the Path of Knowledge and the efficacy of vairagya or equalmindedness. He attached no importance to the wayside experiences of vision or ecstasy, only the ultimate realization of Self.

At a very early age Sri Ramana received the divine call and responded to it unreservedly. He left home for the holy hill of Arunachala at Tiruvannamalai, abiding thenceforth outwardly in Tiruvannamalai, inwardly in the Self.

Existentialist writers describe in terrible words the predicament of man when he encounters death and experiences the impermanence of life and the world. Certainly it is terrible if the fore-doomed ego-self is all one can conceive of. Ramana experienced at the early age of sixteen what death really means, and it was rebirth into deathless life. It was about six weeks before he left home for good. There was nothing wrong with his health, but one day a strong presentiment of death suddenly overtook him. As it was the great turning point of his life, his own description of it is given here.

"The shock of the fear of death drove my mind inwards and I said to myself mentally, without actually framing the words: 'Now death has come; what does it mean? What is it that is dying? This body dies.' And I at once dramatised the occurrence of death. I lay with my limbs stretched out stiff as though *rigor mortis* had set in and imitated



a corpse so as to give greater reality to the enquiry. I held my breath and kept my lips tightly closed so that no sound could escape, so that neither the word 'I' nor any other word could be uttered. 'Well then,' I said to myself, 'this body is dead. It will be carried stiff to the burning ground and there burnt and reduced to ashes. But, with the death of this body, am I dead? Is the body 'I'? It is silent and inert, but I feel the full force of my personality and even the voice of the 'I' within me, apart from it. So I am the Spirit transcending the body. The body dies, but the Spirit that transcends it cannot be touched by death. That means I am the deathless Spirit'. All this was not dull thought; it flashed through me vividly as living truth which I perceived directly, almost without the thought-process. The 'I' was something very real, the only real thing about my present state, and all the conscious activity connected with my body was centred on that 'I'. From that moment onwards, the 'I' or Self focused attention on itself by a powerful fascination. Fear of death had vanished once and for all. Absorption in the Self continued unbroken from that time on. Other thoughts might come and go like the various notes of music, but the 'I' continued like the fundamental *śruti* note that underlies and blends with all the

other notes. Whether the body was engaged in talking, reading or anything else, I was still centred on 'I'. Previous to that crisis, I had no clear perception of my Self and was not consciously attracted to it."¹

This single act of enquiry brought him to constant, unwavering realization of the Self. He taught from the fulness of his Advaitic experience; he was not a theorist. He remained henceforth established in the core of Reality, perceiving the Self in the world at large and in every being. He realized the unity of existence in the Spirit. The Spirit or Brahman is the sole reality. It is the cause of world-appearance and of the apparent plurality of selves. The empirical egos are many but the transcendental Spirit is one. Ignorance of the unity of the Self is called 'Maya'. It is the power of Maya that is responsible for our feeling of separate, self-subsistent being. The pluralist outlook not only hides from us the real nature of the Self but makes us imagine ourselves distinct individuals. As a result of this we do not love our neighbour as ourself but imagine that our good is different from his good. From this arises conflict and anti-social behaviour. Once we believe that we are all separate individuals with distinct ends we naturally feel that the interests of others are not compatible with our own. Indeed we often feel their ruin to be in our interest.

Bhagavan Ramana enjoined persistent enquiry into the nature of the Self. Spiritual ignorance is the root cause of all bondage and knowledge brings release. Therefore he prescribed primarily Jnana marga, the Path of Knowledge, with the technique of Self-enquiry. However, by this he did not mean cold, intellectual knowledge. He was full of compassion for all. Through his silent influence even more than by exposition, he taught his followers that Self-knowledge is the culmination of all spiritual discipline. It leads also to true benevolence, since without realization of the fundamental unity of Being one cannot achieve fellowship with other men. Altruistic activity not

based on realization of the Self is all too often mere gratification of the ego and a form of social vanity. Even our virtues, when unenlightened, can mask our egoism.

Sri Ramana did not teach the cultivation of the various virtues, but he embodied them. He taught that if the Self is realized the virtues will flourish spontaneously but if the ego remains it will find an outlet if not in one vice then in another. His words were wisdom and his proximity was a consecration. To talk with him or even to live in his presence was a great force that held at bay the unregenerate thoughts in us. His Grace enabled us to fight the temptations that assailed us. He was the consolation of many who were disturbed by the torments of the age. He had an insight into men's troubles and perceived their spiritual and mental state as soon as he saw them.

The Maharshi spent about twenty-four years in caves on Arunachala, speaking little and rather resisting than welcoming fame. After that he lived for about twenty-eight years as a world-famous figure in the Ashram that grew up around him at the foot of the hill. Throughout this long period there was absolutely no change in him or his teaching. This was because he was not expressing ideas but voicing realized truth. His Realization permeated all he did and said. He had no flaw of flesh, no error of mind. He was a perfect Jivanmukta. His love went out to the animals in the Ashram as well as the people. His living voice and vibrant silence inundated us with Grace which awakened us from our unreflective state into the need for realizing our true Reality. Unostentatiously he performed all the functions ascribed to a Guru in the Upanishads. There was nothing of the narrow cult in his teaching. Not only did he not ask us to believe blindly, he also did not expect us to surrender to any outside person as guru. He only asked us to surrender ego to Self, ignorance to Knowledge.

¹ *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*, by Arthur Osborne, pp. 18-19, Rider & Co.

However, simple though it may appear, Self-enquiry is really very difficult. Only his Grace makes it possible for us. Man's love of ego prevents him from seeking what lies behind it. To trace the mind back to its source is no easy task. It is hard to break all accustomed props and cherished illusions and see the naked truth. We have to pierce the veil of many colours to perceive the white radiance of eternity. The Maharshi often used to say : "Man is not the body or senses or states of consciousness or intellect but that which uses all of them. He is Spirit, one, indivisible and infinite." To realize this we have first of all to put our mind in order and cleanse it of error-producing impurities. If the window-panes are dirty how can we see inside ?

The Maharshi had a rare technique when he expressed his teaching in words : he clothed wisdom in humour. But it always was pure, uncompromising wisdom. He always reminded us that the goal is realization of pure non-dual consciousness.

He revived in his teaching and exemplified in his life the truth of Advaita. Three traditional phrases summarise this for us : *naham deham*, 'I am not the body' ; *koham*, 'Who am I ?' and *soham*, 'I am He'. The nature of Reality and of spiritual experience is summarised in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* (1. 6) : "The Reality realized through spiritual experience is the soul of Truth, the delight of life, the bliss of the mind and the fulness of Peace and Eternity."

TO SRI BHAGAVAN, THE ONE ETERNAL REALITY*

By C. S. BAGI

The World is *still*. And Light and Sound and Thought
Transfixt in Space and Time, like insects caught
In amber rock, are bygone things inwrought
In Cosmic Consciousness, where all is Nought.

Alas, how vain are eyes that think they see !
And ears they hear, and Mind that it is free !
True Freedom is to stay all thought and be
Like waveless waters of the deepest sea.

No more can I be still than go astray,
For fixed is all I do from day to day.
My steps upon the round of Time must stay ;
Without Thy Grace I cannot even pray.

But what is fixed to me to Thee is void ;
Through hardest rock Thy softest will can ride ;
All fire, all water, earth and air must hide,
Like me, this mock existence, Thee beside.

* From "Golden Jubilee Souvenir".

BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA, SUSTAINER OF SPIRITUAL REALITY

[From an article written for the Golden Jubilee Souvenir of 1946 by DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN, President of India, who was then Vice-Chancellor of Benares Hindu University.]



It is somewhat surprising that many students of religion assume that the religious seers, the true representatives of religious genius, belong wholly to the past and we to-day have to live on the memory of the past. If religion is a living truth, if it has any vitality, it must be capable of producing men who from time to time bear witness to the truth and confirm and correct from their own experience the religious tradition. When the springs of experience dry up, our love for religion is a mere affectation, our faith a belief and our behaviour a habit with no reality behind it. In the Indian religious tradition, religion has meant not an imaginative or intellectual apprehension of Reality but its embodiment in regenerated living. Religion should energise our consciousness, transform our character and make us new men. The truly religious are those who have solid hold of the unseen Reality in which we ordinary men merely believe. They are not freaks proclaiming the reality of spirit, which is esoteric and intense. They tell us that they have a direct knowledge of the Real of which we have indirect or inferential knowledge. For them God is an Abiding Fact, a Living Presence, and in the consciousness of this fact their whole existence is transformed. These artists of the inner life are of different types. Some are full of poetry and music; others are vigorous men of action; still others are solitary souls. Despite these

differences they walk the same road, speak the same language of the soul and belong to the same family.

The Indian tradition has been kept alive by seers who were born in every age and incarnated the great ideal. We have such God-engrossed souls even to-day. It is our good fortune that we have with us to-day a living embodiment of God-centred life, a perfect image of the life divine in the mirror of human existence. Sri Ramana adopts the metaphysical position of Advaita Vedanta. He speaks to us of the Divine which is the pure subject from which all objectivity is excluded. The 'I' is different from the 'me'. The Self is not the body which perishes, nor the senses which suffer the same fate as the body, nor life, mind or intellect. It is the pure Spectator, the *Sakshin*, which is the same in all. We get to realize it not by metaphysical theorising but by spiritual discipline. Reality impinges on the unreality of life and to discover reality, absolute concentration and consecration are essential. We have to still our desires, steady our impulses, tread the ethical path. We cannot see so long as our vision is engrossed in outer forms, but those who turn their gaze inwards behold it. No one can see properly so long as he remains divided and disintegrat-

ed in his consciousness. We must become inwardly whole and free. We cannot acquire this wholeness or integrity if we do not root out our selfish impulses. We cannot know truly or act rightly so long as we are too afraid, too indolent or too self-centred. To see the Real and not merely the things of the world, the eye must be inverted.¹ God is within us. Not comfort but control is happiness. "If any man will come after me let him deny himself," says Jesus. Dedication to God means denial of the ego. We must empty the self in the abyss of God. This process is helped by the practice of unselfish service (*nishkama karma*), devotion (*bhakti*), mind control (*yoga*) and enquiry (*vichara*). Enquiry into self, religious worship, ethical service are means to this realization. The end of all worship — puja, japa, dhyana — is communion with God. With increasing intensity in our devotion, the distance between the human and the Divine diminishes. Indian thought believes in four stages of God-realization — *salokya*, where God and the worshipper dwell in the same world, *samipya*, where the devotee is near the Divine, *sarupya*, where the devotee assimilates more and more the forms and attributes of the Divine, and *sayujya*, where the devotee is united to the Divine.

When one discovers the Divine within oneself, one must discover it also in the outer world of men and things. While the heights within are revealed to those who strenuously exclude all that lies without, the process of seeing all in the fulness of the Divine is more arduous. God is both eternal silence and perpetual activity, the unmoved witness and the ground of all that is, the metaphysical Absolute and the personal Lord. The Divine reveals itself anew in all life and existence. Nothing on earth is excluded from the Divine Consciousness. The Divine is the life which gives birth to us all and is farther than our farthest thought. Sri Ramana not only dwells in a world of pure subjectivity but also has a sense of the Infinite that is in all. As he has elimi-

nated his selfish ego, he becomes the Voice of the whole, the Conscience of all that is. As he has no selfish desires and no sense of agency, he enters into the world-movement and carries out the functions expected of him by that Universal Spirit. Honour and dishonour, praise and blame, do not move him. Actions are not subject to the necessity of nature but are centred in the freedom of the Divine.

It is a false assumption to hold that the spiritually strong have no patience with human weakness. They are not insensitive to human sorrow. The Rishis are revealers of Reality, which is all-bliss. They do not keep their discoveries to themselves. They have a social significance. By getting into their company, we ordinary people realize the actuality of the world of spirit and catch something of their fire. The great of spirit are ministering angels who assist, protect and help those who are in need. Association with the holy people produces detachment from fruits of action. Such detachment leads to desirelessness; from desirelessness arises stability of mind; Liberation in life is then achieved. The Upanishads ask the aspirant for spiritual life to approach, fuel in hand, a teacher versed in scripture, steady in his realization of the Supreme.² The teacher shows the path. His very presence radiates peace and joy. He refashions the souls of those who look to him for help. With keen psychological insight he understands the needs of those who approach him and satisfies them. Like all saints, he has the foundation in God; his surface is intertwined with everything that exists. He loves all beings as he loves himself and cannot rest until every one mirrors the Divine in his life.

The saints are the sustainers of society. Philo remarks: "Households, cities, countries and nations have enjoyed great happiness

¹ *Katha Up.*, 11. 1. 1.

² *Mundaka Up.*, 1. 2. 12.

when a single individual has taken heed of the good and beautiful. Such men not only liberate themselves ; they fill those they meet with a free mind." The true sages possess the inner joy and peace which are independent of outer circumstances. Their happiness is not dependent on outer things. They have passed beyond the forms of social life. Their renunciation is spontaneous and does not involve any idea of sacrifice. They work for the fulfilment of the Divine in the world, for the good of all beings, for the fulfilment of the Pur-

pose. They are one in consciousness and action with the Divine.

To suggest that the spiritual souls are expected to abstain from action in the world is incorrect. The opportunities which the world offers are to be used for self-development. Life is a game where we should play our parts. We are all cast for different roles, and our business is to play them in the right spirit. We may lose the game but we should not mind it. It is the play that matters and not the score we make.

THE THRICE MARVELLOUS MASTER SRI RAMANA*

By HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

Eternity has worn a human face,
Contracted to a little human span ;
Lo, the Immortal has become a man,
A self-imprisoned thing in time and space.

Upon a narrow couch you see Him sit,
Vision of tenderness and grace and calm :
Upon the finite compass of his palm
He holds the secrets of the Infinite.

Behind our loneliness He is the speech
Shedding rare Wisdom ; and, beyond our guess,
Behind our speech, He is the loneliness
Sensed but in glimpses, far beyond our reach.

Thrice marvellous pure Master on the height,
Towards Whom we dumbly yearn, each one apart,
Striving to hold Thy image in the heart,
O cleave our darkness with your searching light !

The light which knows our subterfuges knows
The glooms encircling us, the mournful ways
On which we walk. O silent Master ! raise
Our footfalls unto summits of repose.

We are all tired, since we are un-attuned
To the unfaltering Stillness which You are :
Our feet are bleeding and the goal is far ;
Have mercy, Lord ! and heal us wound by wound.

* From "Golden Jubilee Souvenir".

GUIDANCE OF SAGES

By SRI C. R. PATTABHI RAMAN,
*Union Deputy Minister for Information
and Broadcasting.*

A well known sloka describes the Supreme Siva, in the form of a youthful teacher teaching under a banyan tree disciples, old in age, through silence and lo! their doubts are dispelled. Sri Shankara, while praying to Sri Dakshinamoorthy says that the Lord who pervades everything like ether or space appears *inter alia* in three forms — as Iswara, as Guru (this includes one's own father, who gives the earliest teaching) and as one's own Atma.

Excepting in very rare cases, a Guru is necessary for the fulfilment of one's life and realization of one's self. From time immemorial, we in India have had sages and seers, who handed down the eternal teachings to posterity. The Vedas and the Upanishads, the Ithihasas (Ramayana and Mahabharata) are full of such highly evolved persons. Maharishi Valmiki is in a class by himself and became the vehicle of a great epic. Sri Veda Vyasa of the Mahabharata is an immortal and is considered the Parama Guru. He was surpassed in many cases by his son, Suka Brahman. The great Suka at a very early age attained Brahma Jnana. That did not, however, prevent him from singing the praise of Sri Krishna in the Bhagavata. Incidentally, it is possible that some of my readers may not have grasped the inner meaning of this great Purana. Much of the play or *kreedā* of Sri Krishna in Brindavan takes place before he was eleven years old. At the age of eleven, as a kshatriya, he would have had to go through the Upanayanam ceremony. It was not without meaning that the Lord is described in one of the Namas as "Anadi (the Eter-



nal) Brahmachari". Every time one meditates on each of the Namas or descriptions of the Supreme in the various Namavalies, a new meaning unfolds itself.

There is a beautiful story concerning the Great Vyasa and his son, Suka. The father one day misses the son in the Ashram and is overtaken by filial longing. He runs towards the woods calling out his name "Suka! Suka!". He comes across celestial damsels bathing in a river, who cover themselves as soon as they see the old man. Outraged at this, the sage asks them why they are covering themselves on seeing an old man like him, while they did not do so when his youthful son, Suka, was passing by naked — an "Ava-doota". They replied that his young son Suka had become a part of the infinite and had gone beyond good and evil, pleasure and pain. They actually asked the great Maharishi to utter the name 'Suka'. When he did so and called out 'Suka! Suka!', he found that all things — animate and inanimate, stone, tree, shrub, birds and insects — cried back 'Suka! Suka!'. Even the great Vyasa had to be reminded of the oneness of the Supreme in this manner. Such a realised sage as Suka has sung beautiful verses in praise of the Supreme as Sri Krishna Avatara in the Bhagavata.

The great Shankara is *sui generis*. Having realised the Truth, he still praised the Supreme either as Easwara, Devi or Mahavishnu or in other forms in soul stirring prayers. He restored the ancient faith and gave it a new strength. He united many discordant creeds and mathas. In my view, there is hardly any other human being in historical times who can be classed with him either for intellectual brilliance or universal grasp. We find in his writings various approaches, yogas and upasanas to the Brahman either with form or without. Sage Sadasiva Brahmendra of comparatively recent times having attained Brahma Jnana still sang about the Lord Krishna. "I know of no other reality or truth than the boy Krishna, blue of mien, clad in silk, with beautiful eyes like blooming lotuses and attractive lips, holding the flute in his hand."

Maharishi Ramana appears to me to be comparable to the Suka Brahmam. In a radiant life most of which was lived in Tiruvannamalai, he taught, saying little and kindling enquiry. His was never a new creed or a system of philosophy nor did he seek to found a new institution. He appeared on earth at a time when the spiritual life in India was not very bright. A generation admiring western authors and spending more time on Burke and Berkely, Mill and Macaulay than on the classics in India was lost, in the early years of this century, in admiration of the material achievements and scientific discoveries of the western world. There was a pervasive growth of agnosticism. In an article in a well known journal written recently on the life of a great freedom fighter, we find that this patriot became very gloomy and pessimistic in the evening of his life. He did not have much faith in men and things, much less did he have any other abiding faith to fall back upon. His agnosticism was characterised by deep depression. This was true of many others like him of his and succeeding generations.

"That thou art" proclaims the Chhandogya Upanishad. Enquire ceaselessly "who am I?"

and when you know the answer, you attain immortality. What is so near to every one is also very far away and remote for many millions of human beings. The Lord in the Gita proclaims that "one out of a thousand seeks to attain perfection and one out of that thousand knows Me in reality". It is, however, also true, as pointed out in our sacred books, that in this yuga, "Moksha" or liberation is easy provided a real yearning is kindled in a person.

Many of us have had the good fortune of seeing the sage Ramana when he was alive. A few have received lasting benefits from such a darshan. Every one who went to Tiruvannamalai — with the best of effort quite a few were just unable to go there — became regenerated. Even the utterance of his name purifies and elevates. The "shraddha" of a person is inherent in him and inborn out of the past "samskaras". While a few yogis have realised quickly, others have not succeeded. Perhaps their mind has not been purified and regenerated by tapas and their senses have not really been subjugated.

Sri Ramana was like a ripe fruit falling off a tree. Even before completing his spell of life on earth, he was merged in the Brahman. The bliss of "Samadhi" in which he was merged inspired everyone who came into contact with him. It did not however make him a recluse or prevent him showing kindness to pet animals in the Ashram particularly in the early days, nor smiling beatifically while listening to the Veda Parayana which took place in the hall. When he cried out to Sri Arunachala "Father of all" tears trickled down his face. Samadhi did not prevent him from following the ordained rules of life like early morning bath and the application of sacred ash on his forehead. Not that he needed these, perhaps it was to guide the thousands who had to go through a long process of evolution. Some of us who were very sad when we saw him in his last days could see that he was above

pain or pleasure. His physical frame was weakening and even when beads of perspiration were present on his forehead, during his last days, one could only remember the calm eyes and the charming smile. His message has a particular potency and validity today in the modern world for meditative and thinking people. When Sri Jawaharlal Nehru pleaded "Only by constant self-questioning, individual and national, can we keep on the right path. An easy unthinking confidence is almost as bad as a weak submission to helpless dejection. Real failure comes only when we forget our ideals and objectives and principles and begin

to wander away from the road which leads to their realisation", he was revealing the modern mind. Sri Ramana pointed out a short-cut to "Brahma Jnana" for the young and the old of all climes and races. He demonstrated very clearly the truth in the Gita, knowing which there is nothing else to be known, i.e. the knowledge of kshetra and kshetragna, the human body in the aggregate and the "knower" of that. To an enquiry "who am I?" the answer was given a new look by Sri Ramana. The sum total of his teaching is very small, but is cherished throughout the world.

RECOLLECTIONS OF BHAGAVAN

By ALAN CHADWICK *

He had a great sense of humour and when talking a smile was seldom far from his face. He had a great fund of stories, personal and from the scriptures, and was a magnificent actor. He would always dramatise the protagonists of any story he was telling. It was a sight, for instance, to see him depicting fear—he who had never known fear. When the story was very pathetic his voice would be choked with tears so that he was unable to proceed.

When people came to him with their family stories he would laugh with the happy and sometimes shed tears with the bereaved. In this way he seemed to reciprocate the emotions of others.

He never raised his voice and if he did occasionally seem angry there was no ripple on the surface of his peace. Talk to him a moment later and he would answer calmly and quite undisturbed. With the rest of us some effect of anger will remain for a while even after the cause has gone. Internally we take time to regain our peace.

He would never touch money. This was not because he hated it. He knew that it was necessary for the purposes of daily life, but he just was not interested in it. Money and presents came to the Ashram management. That was all right. They needed funds to maintain the institution, but he was indifferent to it.

People said he would not talk but this was a foolish legend spun out of his saying that his real teaching was in silence. Sometimes he would talk freely. Often also he would sit silent.

In every way he liked simplicity. He preferred to sit on the floor but was induced to use a couch. He would never, if he could help it, allow preference to be shown to him. For instance, in the dining hall he was adamant on this point. Even if some tonic was brought for him he would refuse it unless it was supplied to all. "If it is good for me then it must be good for them too," he would say.

* For a note on whom see our 'Ashram Bulletin' of January 1964.

THE VEDANTIC TRADITION IN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

[From an article published in the 1946 Golden Jubilee Souvenir by the late SRI SWAMI SIDDHESWARANANDA who was for many years head of the French branch of the Ramakrishna Mission at Gretz, near Paris.]

Sri Ramana Maharshi represents the pure tradition in Advaita Vedanta. In this article I propose to examine certain aspects of the life and teachings of Maharshi that have appealed to me as verifications of Vedantic truths.

In Vedanta there is a theistic as well as a non-theistic tradition and these refer to two aspects of reality. The first treats of Saguna or Qualified Brahman and the second of Nirguna or Unqualified Brahman. The Bhagavad Gita says that the path of the Unconditioned is not for the aspirant who is still bound by the 'I-am-the-body' idea (XII. 5). Maharshi transcended the body-idea on the very day he made the investigation into the nature of the Self. His spiritual career is of particular interest to the student of Vedanta, for an example like his is rare to find. He is one who acceded to the Nirguna ideal without passing through the preliminary stages of discipline where much importance is given to devotion and worship. In history the most brilliant example of the same line of research and realization is that of Lord Buddha, though he had to spend long years in meditation before he had the Awakening. We are now above the prejudice handed down through ages where Buddhism and Vedanta in their spiritual appeal were placed one against the other in unrelenting opposition. We now consider Lord Buddha as one of the continuators of the Vedantic tradi-



tion of the Upanishads where the non-theistic ideal was lived and practised.

There are two Vedantic positions in conformity with two grades of seekers aspiring to know the One Ultimate Reality : the less capable consider Brahman as Saguna, the other, higher type consider It as Nirguna. The one is theological and the other philosophical. The two standpoints are not mutually exclusive, for the goal of the two methods is identical, namely to bring the aspirant to the realization of Brahman.

When Maharshi made the investigation 'Who am I?' he had not envisaged this technique or any other. He had not then any theological education. He once told me that at that time he was not even familiar with such terms as 'Brahman' and 'Atman'. He had not the support of any of the accepted theses on the subject. The enquiry was his own and the way he discovered was equally his own. He discovered much later that he had come to the same conclusion that scriptures and the experience of others in the same line had arrived at from time immemorial.

Later on in life, when he came into contact with such classical texts as Drigdrisya-Viveka he instinctively found there was a family likeness to the psychological or rather trans-psy-

chological way that he himself had followed. As Maharshi plunged into the depths of his soul during his analysis of 'Who am I?' he got beyond the plane of doubts; for he had transcended the limitations set by the intellectualizing character of the mind that never permits that disjunction with the name-form complex which is the field of empirical experience. His method has much in common with that of Lord Buddha. When Malunkya asked Buddha questions that did not touch the vital issue involved — that of suffering — the latter replied that one pierced by an arrow would be interested only in plucking it out and not in discussing of what substance it was made, whether it had a poisoned tip, etc.

One does not find in Maharshi the type of bhakti associated with devotional forms; but it can be said that if the way of bhakti brings one to an expression of bounty and love towards all, he is that. His very nature is imbued with love (prem). I should not omit to mention here a scene that I myself have witnessed. At my request he recited certain lines from the composition of the Saint Manikavachakar where the poet speaks of the condition of the soul melted in love: hardly had the Maharshi pronounced a few lines when there was a brilliance in his face. He who rarely expresses in any outward form his inner emotion could not restrain a few silent tears. A slanting ray of the morning sun from the hillside made the scene still more vivid. A peace that passeth all understanding pervaded the whole atmosphere. For more than an hour there was perfect silence.

On one occasion Maharshi told me that what he realized on the first day when he made the Enquiry has ever remained with him. It has neither increased nor decreased. When I asked him why he came all the way to Tiruvannamalai and why he underwent so many hardships which we would characterise as sadhana or quest he only waved his hand, implying "I don't know why all that happen-

ed". Our inquiring minds want explanations and are easily satisfied with some such fiction as destiny or prarabdha, which do not exist for the Jnani. For it is said that the three karmas of the person who realizes Brahma-jnana are all dissolved at one stroke. From the point of view of the Ramana Maharshi it must be so.

What impressed me most in reading the characteristics of the Jivanmukta, Realized while still alive, in Viveka-Chudamani were the lines: "He has his mind merged in Brahman; nevertheless he is quite alert but free from the characteristics of the waking state." (v. 429). While staying a few days with the Maharshi these lines often came to my mind. To all outward appearance he very often looked as if he were unconscious; but his mind was ever in such a state of concentration that even during the moments when he appeared to be inert he knew all that was going on in the hall. Once in repeating verses from the Ribhu Gita, old Tenamma made a certain error in pronunciation and, opening his eyes, he gently corrected her. In Drikdrisya-Viveka, in v. 30, there is a fine account of the concentration of a man of Realization "With the disappearance of attachment to the body and with the Realization of the Supreme Self, one experiences samadhi to whatever object the mind is directed."

We often hear it said that many of the devotees of the Maharshi saw him in a state of ecstasy. I do not contradict their interpretation of Maharshi as they saw him. I would like here only to give a certain Vedantic background to his attainment of the sahaja state, which, I think, should not be interpreted in terms of ecstasy. Ecstasy is a religious experience. Ecstasy is attained in the spiritual union with the Godhead. Union is possible only when a difference is conceded between the units that afterwards enter into relation. But the sahaja state is the natural state of the Self when all the superimpositions have been

thrown away, that is, in the language of the Gita, when one becomes "satisfied in the Self alone, by the Self" (11. 55).

Let us see what Shankara has to say with regard to this topic. In the case of a Jnani the text "he is merged in Brahman", as in the mantra in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, should be interpreted, according to Shankara, in a figurative sense. In commenting on the passage, he concludes by saying: "Therefore the Atman by itself has no difference due to bondage or Liberation, Knowledge or ignorance, for it is admitted to be always the same and homogeneous by nature."

From the above statements we should understand that the state of sahaja cannot be equated with the union attained in any particular mystic condition. Whatever may be the mystic value of these transcendental states described in the ecstasies, a Jnani—not denying, of course, the possibilities of these states—remains completely detached from them. For

he knows that every mode of experience, material or mystic, is the same manifestation of Atman and in every aspect of manifestation it is the same Brahman in action. His mind does not yearn for any special kind of experience. He has nothing to achieve, nor has he anything to be achieved through others (see Gita, III. 17). He is the person in whom there will be no tendency at all to proselytise. He has no mission to achieve. According to Shankara in the 'Nirvanashtaka', he alone can say: "I have no death or fear, no distinction of rank or class. I have no father, no mother, no friend, no master nor disciple.¹ I am Absolute Knowledge and Bliss. I am the all-pervading Self."

In the presence of the Maharshi this is indeed the impression that a seeker of the Vedantic tradition gets.

¹ The Maharshi did indeed sometimes say that he had no disciples. Yet he gave instructions and guidance as a Guru does to disciples. It is for those who can to understand.—*Editor*.

SILENT INFLUENCE

By ACHARYASWAMI

It is twenty-eight years since I first visited Sri Ramanasramam. The moment I entered the meditation hall and found myself face to face with Bhagavan I felt a thrill at heart the impression of which is still fresh in my memory. I could at once feel that here was a Saint and Sage of childlike simplicity, perfect renunciation and tremendous spiritual power.

Subsequently I paid a number of visits to that sacred place and every time I returned greatly benefited.

His teaching of Self-Knowledge was in the direct tradition of the great Shankara, but he showed regard and appreciation for all paths and even for all religions and their founders and scriptures. As a result followers of various religions were drawn to him from many parts of the world.

Bhagavan was a teacher of few words. Sometimes he might explain in words but it was his piercing gaze and tremendous silence that made the greatest impact.

BHAGAVAN'S WRITING

By T. K. S.

To be still and know that 'I am that I am' is the essence of Bhagavan's teaching. He wrote little and what he did was nearly all at somebody's request. The 'Marital Garland of Letters to Sri Arunachala', the first and foremost of the 'Five Hymns of Sri Arunachala'¹ appeared in response to the request of his sadhu devotees in the days when they used to go round begging for food before there was an Ashram. They used to walk round singing spiritual songs and the householders would give them food liberally, knowing that it was to be shared with Sri Bhagavan. Knowing this, a few unscrupulous beggars used to pose as Ramana bhaktas and also go round singing. On account of this his bhaktas asked Bhagavan to make a special song for them to sing.

At first he did not respond to their request, but some time later, while they were walking round the Hill, the 108 exquisite, profound verses sprang forth from him spontaneously as a marriage garland for Sri Arunachala. They are the outpouring of a pining soul to its divine Lover. They still remain the solace and delight of his devotees.

Next came the 'Navamani Malai' (Nine Gems). These were born on different occasions but were later strung together like jewels on a string. The first of them explains the dance of the motionless Arunachala, while the second equates the term Arunachala with Sat-chitananda (Being-Consciousness-Bliss). Here is a strange thing: while at other holy centres the Shakti dances while Siva looks on, here the display of the Mother's activities ceases and merges in Siva while he dances as Arunachala.



The 'Dasaka' and 'Ashtaka' (Ten and Eight Verses), which come next, are a group by themselves. The former begins with the word 'karunaiyal' (by Thy Grace). This word kept ringing in Bhagavan's ears, he said. Several times he shook it away, asking what he had to do with it, but still it came back until at last he uttered it. The stream thus started flowed on until the ten superb verses of the hymn had been written. Bhagavan then thought that the flow had worked itself out, but it still continued, although in a different form and with different contents until it had built up the 'Ashtaka' as well. While the 'Dasaka' was more an appeal for Divine Grace, the 'Ashtaka' is a superb and full explanation of the significance of Arunachala, the Absolute Being-Consciousness-Bliss which, as the 'I-I' of our being, transforms itself into all that is. It also shows the way back to the Source, to that state of being which is supreme Peace.

The 'Arunachala Pancharatna' or 'Five Verses to Arunachala', the last of the series, was first composed by Sri Bhagavan in Sanskrit and then translated by him into Tamil. He first casually composed the first stanza. Long afterwards some one showed it to Kavyakanta

¹ Published in our issue of October 1964.

Ganapati Sastri² who urged him to write four more, so that the first would be benedictory, the second on the Divine, and the next three on the three paths of Jnana, Yoga and Bhakti. Thus the five gem-like verses comprise a complete treatise in themselves.

The 'Ulladu Narpadu' (Forty Verses on Reality)¹ and their 'Supplement', a second forty, were written on various occasions, this time under the urging of the poet Muruganar³ and later strung together in a sequence. These were the less devotional, more philosophical work of Bhagavan. The 'Upadesa Saram', (Instruction in Thirty Verses)⁴ was also written on the request of Muruganar.

As long ago as 1927 such of Bhagavan's works as were already written were put together as 'Collected Works' in the original Tamil. The pundits, sitting in the presence of Bhagavan, were talking about the need for a preface to it, all agreeing that one was needed but none undertaking to write it, each one excusing himself and saying that he was not qualified for the task. This went on for some time, each one proposing some one else for the task and that one declining, while Bhagavan sat and watched without saying anything.

Later in the evening I was passing by the hall when Bhagavan looked at me and said, "Why don't you write the preface?"

I was taken aback at the suggestion. "I would venture to if I had Bhagavan's blessing for the task," I said.

Bhagavan said: "Write it and it will come out all right."

So I began writing at dead of night and to my great surprise within three quarters of an hour had got it written out as though driven by some higher power. I changed not a word or comma of it and at two o'clock in the morning took it into the hall and placed it at the feet of Bhagavan. He was pleased with the arrangement of the contents and the simplicity of style. He passed it as satisfactory and asked me to take it away.

But when I had taken up the sheets of paper and gone only a few steps he called me back to show him it again. I had ended up by saying: "It is to be hoped that this work in the form of Bhagavan's Grace will give all who aspire to eternal Truth Liberation through gaining the Supreme Bliss by the removal of all misery." Bhagavan said: "Why have you written 'It is to be hoped'? Why not say: 'It is certain'?" So saying, he took the paper and with his own hands changed 'nambukiren' into 'tinnam'. Thus did he set the seal of his approval on the book, giving it to his devotees as a charter of Liberation in the form of his teaching (upadesa) which leaves no trace of doubt in the mind.

² For an article on whom see our issue of April 1965.

³ For an introduction to whom see our issue of October 1964.

⁴ Published in our issue of January 1965.

I had the pleasure of paying my respects to Ramana Maharshi in 1946 when I was a Minister of the Madras Government. It was a great inspiration to me and I can never forget my visit to him. No wonder that the world remembers him even after his demise. May his memory live for ever in the hearts of many of his devotees.

— V. V. GIRI,
Governor of Mysore State.

AN IMPRESSION OF MAHARSHI SRI RAMANA

By SWAMI MUKTANANDA

In our issue of April 1965 (pp. 108-110) we had an article about the strange miracle-working saint Swami Nityananda. Swami Muktananda was his disciple and is now his successor. In this article he tells us of the impression made on him by a brief visit that he paid to Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi was a great saint who always occupied a high place of reverence in the minds of people. His Divine Personality endeared him to all beings. The word 'Ramana' means 'One who plays' (ramate iti ramana). You may call him 'Atman' or 'Guru': both are synonyms indicating the same divine power of which this universe is a game.

Maharshi Ramana was a divine soul, completely detached, beyond all differences, highly self-restrained and playfully living in the Ocean of transcendental consciousness (the state of Turiyatita). I had the good fortune to be in his company just for three days. Even during that short stay I found that any one entering his presence even for a moment would experience a state of mental peace free from all thoughts. This shows that he was a fully realized soul in a transcendental state, beyond all thoughts. Some believed him to be a Siddha or great Saint and some believed him to be an incarnation of God. From the Vedantic point of view all are one in essence. God Himself appears in the world as Siddha. So Siddha is God and he is the entire universe. Therefore everything is the manifestation of Bhagavan Ramana, the Spirit at play. Any one going even once to Maharshi Ramana felt as if the Maharshi belonged to him. This was because he really belonged to every one and every one to him.

Wearing only a loincloth, he used to sit relaxed on a sofa; but still he looked more



attractive than even the most richly attired princes because, as my revered Gurudev Nityananda used to say, Maharshi Ramana was beyond body-consciousness, beyond all attributes and beyond the dualities. This indicates that he was on a plane far above bodily pain and pleasure, a plane inaccessible to ordinary mortals. Realization of the Self was all important in his teaching. To every one who asked he unhesitatingly gave the advice to meditate on the Self, worship the Self and know the Self. This is because, according to

Vedanta, there is nothing worth knowing, hearing or seeing except one's true Self. One who was and is Ramana is this eternal Truth beyond all time, having neither beginning nor end. Therefore the path in quest of Truth shown by him will remain accessible to all for a long time to come, because he proclaimed absolute Truth which remains unobstructed at all times, in all places and under all conditions. His message appears to some the oldest among the old, to others the newest of the new. Actually it is ancient and modern at the same time because the concepts of old and new are imposed on the Self by others, while it is really ageless and eternal. Some people call the present times a new age, but according to the Maharshi all things, old or new, are

projections of the same eternal Truth. Those who loved the Maharshi got from him the true supreme bliss attained by means of Jnana (Knowledge), Yoga (spiritual discipline) and Bhakti (devotion). This means that from him one got the essence of all spiritual practices. That is why I call him one who plays (*ramate iti ramana*). He is the ever-adorable Great Soul. My adorations to him.

The quarterly magazine published from Sri Ramanasramam by Arthur Osborne has become helpful to aspirants in their spiritual quest and also adds to their knowledge of the Maharshi. It has a beneficial effect on them. I wish all success to Mr. Osborne in his work, which will bring good and happiness to many.

M. S. KAMATH

By 'SEIN'

This seems a fitting occasion to remember one of the older devotees who has long since passed away. M. S. Kamath was editor of the *Madras Sunday Times* which in his day stood on a very high level and was widely respected. He used it particularly for disseminating spiritual teaching, and in the first place for making the Maharshi and his teaching more widely known. He was a man who loved service. People who saw him participating in the traditional feeding of the poor that took place at the Ashram (and still does) on the Jayanti (birth anniversary) of Bhagavan remarked on the devotion and sincerity he showed in serving them. While in Madras he was always ready to help with Ashram work, and especially with the still infant publication department.

The Ashram would write to him for any of its needs and he would immediately attend to it by sending one of his sub-editors to do so, giving it priority over his own professional work. People even used to joke about it at the Ashram, saying that if you wrote to him for a new broomstick (costing an anna or so) he would delegate a sub-editor for the job and lend his car and go to any expense to see that it reached the Ashram the same day. He served Bhagavan and his disciples wholeheartedly and unreservedly. Bhagavan appreciated his spirit of devotion. When informed of his death he actually shed tears and said in a voice choking with emotion: "So Kamath is gone! Where now shall we find any who will serve us with such sincerity and dedication?"

BUDDHA AND RAMANA

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

It is reported that Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was once asked why the Lord Buddha refused to answer questions about the after life, and that he replied : " Perhaps he was more concerned with the real work of guiding men to Self-Realization than with satisfying useless curiosity." It has not been sufficiently remarked how close the teaching of this Vedic Sage born in modern times is to that of the Blessed One. And there could be no better proof that it was the pure essence of Hindu spirituality that the Buddha reaffirmed, leaving aside only the accidentals.

Sri Bhagavan also refused to satisfy men's curiosity and constantly insisted that it was not theoretical understanding that was needed but only enlightenment. When asked : " What shall I be when I die ? ", he answered : " Why do you want to know what you will be when you die before you know what you are now ? First find out what you are now." By which he meant : " Seek the deathless, formless Truth of Nirvana, which alone is behind the appearance of this life or any other life." When asked about the nature of God he replied : " Why do you want to know what God is before you know what you are ? First find out what you are." Nay more, he has even been heard to say : " There is no Ishwara." By which he meant : " There is no God apart from the Self which alone is, just as there is no you apart from the Self."

True, he often spoke of God, but that was a concession to ignorance, for so long as the conception of the individual self as a real and



separate being continues, the conception of God as Creator, Master and Lover of that individual self must also continue ; but for those who were willing to understand he always came back to the final truth that there is only the Self. Therefore he said : " There is no God apart from the Self, for if there were he would be a Self-less God, which would be absurd." He also insisted that you have no being apart from the self. The conclusion is obvious, however frightening.

There is, indeed, an apparent contradiction, for Sri Bhagavan proclaimed that there is only Atma whereas Lord Buddha declared that there is no atma ; but such a contradiction between two Masters who both point the way to the Absolute Truth can never be more than verbal. In this case, Sri Bhagavan used the word Atma to mean the Universal Self which is Nirvana, whereas Lord Buddha used it to mean the individual soul. And Sri Bhagavan taught also that there is no individual being, not only in the sense that it will not endure but that is not now ; " Never mind what you will be when you die ; find out what you are now."

The Buddha was very little concerned with theory. His purpose was not to erect either a theology or a social order but simply to show

men the way from suffering to peace. And yet theorists have descended upon his teaching and argued it out into patterns which help neither themselves nor others to escape from the wheel of suffering. It is possible that they will fasten on the teaching of Sri Bhagavan also, but it will not be his real teaching that they expound, for his real teaching was to avoid the inessential and follow the way to Self-realization. "But people do not like even to hear of this Truth, whereas they are eager to know what lies beyond, about heaven and hell and reincarnation. Because people love mystery and not the Truth religions cater to them so as to eventually bring them round to the Self. Whatever be the means adopted, you must at last return to the Self, so why not abide in the Self here and now?" Even more explicitly he said: "Just as it is futile to examine the rubbish that has to be swept up only to be thrown away, it is futile for him who seeks to know the Self if, instead of casting away the *tattvas* that envelop the Self, he sets himself to enumerate them or to examine their qualities." He who says that this Master taught this and that taught the other has not understood their purpose. They are not here to argue but to show men the way from suffering to Blessedness. Even though they may expound the one Truth in different modes and point different paths, the Truth and Goal is the same. But in these two cases there was striking similarity in the language spoken and the Path indicated.

The story of Sri Bhagavan is of the most simple. Born in a poor Brahmin family of South India, he went to a mission school and learnt a little English; and at the age of 17 he passed from darkness to Enlightenment as simply as any adolescent passes from boyhood to manhood. Lying upon his bed, he suddenly pondered: Who am I? I am not this changing body, nor am I these passing thoughts. What then am I? If this body dies shall I still be? And he tried to experience death, to imagine his body dead and carried

to the burning ghat. He lay stiff and held his breath to intensify the experience. There was a momentary intense fear of death, and then death was dead. He was no more the ego, he had awakened into Enlightenment of the Deathless Self. Theory he learnt later, and said: "Yes, that is it", just as a woman to whom a child had been born might read afterwards about childbirth.

He left his family secretly and went to the sacred hill of Arunachala and there he remained for 54 years until, on April 14, 1950, he left the body he had worn. Arrived at Arunachala, he remained immersed in the effulgence of pure Bliss, not conscious of his body, not needing it, not speaking or moving and scarcely eating, so that to onlookers it appeared to be the most intense *tapas*.

It was neither mind nor body that dragged him back to an acceptance of worldly conditions; but pure compassion. Devotees gathered round him, sought to bask in his Grace, craved his guidance. Once again, as in the time of the Tathagata, he saw that men were bewildered and needed guidance, and out of compassion he lived out his long life among us subject to all the conditions of human pain and sickness.

The path he prescribed was strikingly similar to that of the Buddha for he also taught that it is attachment that binds men to their suffering and that by detachment and dispassion they can discard birth and death and suffering and realise their true state of unshadowed Bliss. The weapon that he gave for achieving this was the *vichara*, the question: Who am I? Has some one angered you? Who is angered or offended? Who am I? Does some success flatter you and tempt you to further ambition? Who is pleased or flattered? Who am I? By remembering that I am not the doer, it is possible to live and act in the world in perfect equanimity, without passion or anxiety and without suffering. The image he gave was the bank cashier who

handles lakhs of rupees quite efficiently but without any agitation because he knows that it is not his money. So also it is not you, not the real Self, that is affected by changes of state and fortune.

And yet the *vichara* goes much farther than this for such dispassion would, in itself, be a cold and negative state. As the ego goes out, the Spirit must come in to take its place. And the *vichara* is a positive and terrifically potent weapon to awaken the awareness of Self, the Spirit in man. Bhagavan's instruction was to sit in meditation, concentrating the consciousness in the heart — not the physical heart on the left but the spiritual heart on the right side of the chest, the centre of I-ness in man, the spot to which every man spontaneously and unwittingly points when he says: "You mean me?" or "I did it." And, thus concentrating, ask yourself: "Who am I?" If thoughts arise during the meditation do not follow them but observe them and ask of each thought: "What is it? Whence did it come? And why? And to whom?" And so each thought will lead back to the basic I-thought. And who am I?

There is no mental or verbal answer. There cannot be since the purpose of the meditation is to awaken awareness of the Self that is beyond thought and words. The answer is a vibration of Self-awareness that, after some practice, awakens in the heart. And by effort and practice this is to be made ever more constant and profound. Then it will sing itself awake every time the *vichara* is used in the way first mentioned, and the reply will be blissful awareness of the Self that is untouched by anger or greed or desire, and the dispassion will be radiant not cold. This awareness of the Self must be made constant, and then all that is needed is not to interfere, and the Self will devour the ego.

Like the way and teaching of the Buddha, that of Bhagavan is simple and direct, because it is central. And yet what has happened is

that a new Path has been opened for mankind, a Path adapted to the peculiar conditions of our modern age. There are many today who find it difficult or impossible to withdraw from the world or even to observe the full and detailed obligations of their religion. And Bhagavan has absolved those who turn to him from the need to do so. Not only Hindus but Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, Parsis, Jews, all came to him and he never advised any to change from one religion to another. He prescribed the *vichara* for all alike. Nor did he advise any to withdraw from the life of the world. Since the one object is to overcome the I-am-the-doer illusion, how does it help to exchange the thought: "I am a householder" for the thought "I am a monk"? It is necessary to discard both and remember only "I am". Through his tremendous Grace and Power, Bhagavan has opened to mankind again in this age the direct path of Self-enquiry. "The attempt to destroy the ego through ways other than Self-enquiry is like the thief turning policeman to catch the thief that is himself. Self-enquiry alone can reveal the truth that neither the ego nor the mind really exists and enable one to realize the pure, undifferentiated Being of the Self or the Absolute. Having realized the Self, nothing remains to be known because it is perfect Bliss, it is the All."

APPENDIX

This article was written over fifteen years ago as a chapter in a book called '*Ramana Arunachala*' published by Sri Ramanasramam. After writing it I found that there were Buddhists as unenlightened and intolerant as the followers of any theistic religion who objected to a comparison between the Maharshi and the Buddha. Indeed, one alluded scathingly in a book he wrote to people who could compare a 'mere *jivan mukta*' with the Buddha. I wish to elucidate this question, not in any spirit of emulation but as a matter of understanding: because understanding is so much of the essence of Buddhism that lack of it seems more shocking than in a personalized and devotional religion. And any one who can use the adjective 'mere' to qualify the

term 'Jivan Mukta' betrays thereby a total lack of understanding.

There is a universe composed of physical and subtle worlds full of animate and inanimate beings of countless variety. Apart from men and physical animals, these comprise gods, spirits and demons. Among the men are Buddhas, Prophets, Avatars, Saints and Sages who bring guidance and teach wisdom. In the form they assume all of these, as the Buddha said, are compound beings and therefore subject to dissolution. Mukti means the waking into realization that all these worlds with all their gods, men and demons, Prophets, Avatars and Buddhas, are a manifestation having no more reality within Nirvana, Dharma Kaya, Essence of Mind, Self or whatever term one may use than a dream

in the mind of the dreamer. A Jivan Mukta is one who has awakened from the dream while still alive on earth. Therefore to say that the Buddha or any one or anything else, divine or human, is greater than he is to say that one part of his dream still exists after he has awakened from it and is more real than he is, which is nonsense.

One could deny that any one but a Buddhist or any one but a Buddha can attain Mukti. That would be mere religious bigotry such as one finds among the blinkered exoterists of every religion; but to speak of a Jivan Mukta and couple it with the adjective 'mere' or suggest that there can be anything beyond simply shows that one does not know what one is talking about.

SIVARAMA REDDIAR

By 'SEIN'

I should like to say a little more about Sivarama Reddiar, whose obituary appeared in our previous issue. Devotees and visitors who bought books at the Ashram bookstall over the years must have noticed the grave, silent, reserved man in attendance there. A few minutes' talk with him was enough to convince one of his unshakable faith in Bhagavan. I knew that he was well versed in Advaita, so I asked him once whether he had any doubt in it.

He said, "For nearly twenty years I had a haunting doubt but it was dispelled by a few words from Bhagavan." He then told me his story.

His whole family were disciples of the saint Achutaswami of Polur, who had visited Bhagavan as far back as 1900 and instantly recognized his supreme station and told his disciples about it. Reddiar was initiated by one of the disciples of Sri Achutaswami into taraka mantra and shadmuki upasana, that is shutting the six doorways of the head and seeing a light between the eyebrows. He practised

this for nearly ten years, sometimes in solitude and sometimes in the family. The result was that he was surrounded by brilliant light and had a feeling of exhilaration. Nevertheless he still had a doubt about the reality of this state.

In 1934, by which time he was already settled at Bhagavan's Ashram, he asked Bhagavan about it. Bhagavan said: "Yes, that is the state of nidhidhyasana. You heard the guru instruct you; you assimilated his teaching, and now you experience it. But this is still on the level of the triputi (the threefold reality of seer-sight-seen). You have to go beyond that and find out who is the 'I' that experiences this light and exhilaration. They only exist for him. Who is he?"

"Even before this I had known in theory about transcending the triputi," Reddiar declared, "but only now did I grasp it as a practical policy and try to put it into practice. And from this moment all doubts disappeared. I took this explanation as my final initiation. From then on I had no more doubts. From then on it became real bliss." Seeing him, one could well believe this.

CHRIST AND RAMANA

By BANNING RICHARDSON

It is a tenet of Hinduism that all spiritual paths lead to the same goal. In a broad sense this is true, but also it hides the truth. For if one has followed one religion or another, one YOGA or another, one has still in the end to go through the process of self-analysis, of inner search and surrender which is best described in our time by Sri Maharshi. In other words the 'goal' is not a goal but a path. When one has learnt everything that one can from one's inherited or acquired religion or spiritual discipline, he has to take this prized possession and cast it to one side — the most painful of acts — and, starting afresh, follow the simple, scientific method that the Saint of Arunachala teaches us.

I have said that this Saint is the greatest contemporary exponent of this age-old teaching. This is as true for the scientific-minded Westerner as it is for the Easterner. Dr. Jung writes : 'The identification of the Self with God will strike the European as shocking. It is a specifically oriental Realization, as expressed in Sri Ramana's utterances.' No doubt such identification is shocking to the Western Christian or other orthodox religionist but, as I have implied, it is consonant with Christ's teachings, if they are approached afresh without prejudice.

If one examines the New Testament carefully one finds that Christ is trying to convince a fanatically monotheistic people that God could inhabit human form for a special purpose, and that the nature of God was not something different from man's but that one could see the image of God in a perfect man. And he proclaimed himself to be a perfect being who had presided over human destiny since the world began. This in itself was an

overwhelming dose for the orthodox Jew to swallow. One would not therefore expect that Christ would go on farther and show that this Perfect Being is latent in every man, because God is in every man. But in fact he does say this by implication, and sometimes directly, throughout his teaching. Take for instance — The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation ; Neither shall they say, Lo here ! or lo there ! for behold, the Kingdom of God is within you (Luke, CVII, 20 and 21). In



other words his first lesson was, 'Heaven is within you and it is a spiritual state, not a material place.'

Having made this clear, he goes on to say, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect' (Mathew, V. 48). Thus he was saying in fact, 'God dwells within you; you can become perfect like Him.' This was a revolutionary teaching, and its full implications are only understood if one comes into touch with the teachings of a Ramakrishna or a Sri Maharshi.

But Christ went even farther than this. In verses 33-36 of the tenth chapter of St. John's Gospel we read — 'Jesus answered them (the Jews): Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?'

'If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the son of God?'

So we might ask today, Do you accuse Sri Maharshi of blasphemy for saying that the True Man within us is God, when Christ was executed on the same charge by part of the Jews 2,000 years ago? Just because the Church has petrified his teaching, as Judaism before his time had petrified the teaching of the Prophets, do you expect those who feel God stirring within them to join the mob who cry 'Blasphemy'?

And to pursue this argument a little farther in order to reveal the basic similarity of Jesus Christ's and Bhagavan Maharshi's teachings, one remembers that Christ answered the rich, young man who came to him and asked, 'Good master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life', by saying 'Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God' (Mark, X. 18). This, taken with the quotations already mentioned, clearly shows that he believed that God was in all

men and that all men could attain the perfection that he, Christ, himself revealed, through following his path — i.e., actively loving God and one's fellowmen, and knowing that the Kingdom of Heaven is within each one of us.

Finally, this view is reinforced by, 'For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit, your Father which speaketh in you' (Mathew, X. 20). Could anything be clearer than this — that Christ wanted men to realize, as does Sri Maharshi, that God is not something apart from men to be worshipped and feared at a distance, but the only true reality in each man; and that man's work is to discard the false, imaginary ego which he has allowed to deceive him and so to separate him from his true Self, which is God. If that is blasphemy, then let us acknowledge ourselves, as Christ and his followers acknowledged themselves, to be blasphemers in the eyes of the world; for that way lies salvation.

"On reaching the interior of the Heart
through search,
the ego bows its head and falls,
then shines forth the other I, the
Supreme Self,
which is not the ego, but the perfect and
transcendental Being!"

says Sri Maharshi.

But in addition to being in the true line of Spiritual teachings — the line that extends back to Gautama the Buddha and Sri Mahavir of the Jains, in one branch; and to Mohammed, Plotinus, Christ, Plato, Socrates, Pythagoras and Zoroaster in another — I believe Sri Maharshi to be the greatest modern interpreter, and indeed, in a sense, the fulfilment of modern psychology and psycho-analysis and that therefore he must be taken seriously even by Western or Eastern materialists.

Dr. Jung recognized this when he wrote, 'The wisdom and mysticism of the East have, therefore, a very great deal to tell us, provided

they speak in their own inimitable speech . . . The life and teachings of Sri Ramana are not only important for the Indian but also for the Westerner. Not only do they form a record of great human interest but also a warning message to a humanity which threatens to lose itself in the chaos of its unconsciousness and lack of self control.'

Man is unquestionably at the cross roads. He can choose the path of materialistic phantoms, seeking only better social and economic conditions, or he can turn his face towards the old light rising anew in the East, which while

by no means scorning improved conditions of life for the masses, seeks to direct man's inquisitive nature primarily towards the realisation of his own being.

Its aim is the same as Christ's — 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you,' which has been read in countless churches every week for nineteen hundred years. But faithless, worldly-minded mankind has considered this to be merely a pleasant aphorism, not to be taken literally. Now men must take it literally or be prepared for further destruction, and indefinite chaos.

Who am I? Ask yourself the question. The body (*annamayakosa*) and its functions are not 'I'. Going deeper, the mind (*manomayakosa*) and its functions are not 'I'. The next step takes one to the question: Wherefrom do these thoughts arise? The thoughts may be spontaneous, superficial, or analytical. They operate in the mind. Then who is aware of them? The existence of thoughts, their clear conception and operation, become evident to the individual. This analysis leads to the conclusion that the individuality is operative as the cogniser of the existence of thoughts and their sequence. This individuality is the ego, or, as people say, 'I'. *Vijnanamayakosa* (intellect) is only the sheath of the 'I' and not the 'I' itself. Enquiring further, the questions arise: Who is this 'I'? Wherefrom does it come? 'I' was not aware in sleep. Simultaneously with its rise, sleep changes to dream and wakefulness. But I am not concerned with the dream state just now. Who am I now, in the wakeful state? If I originated on waking from sleep, then the 'I' was covered up with ignorance. Such an ignorant 'I' cannot be what the scriptures refer to or the wise affirm. 'I' am beyond even sleep; 'I' must be here and now, and must be what I was all along in sleep and dream also, unaffected by the qualities of these states. 'I' must therefore be the unqualified substratum underlying these three states (after *anandamayakosa* is transcended).

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

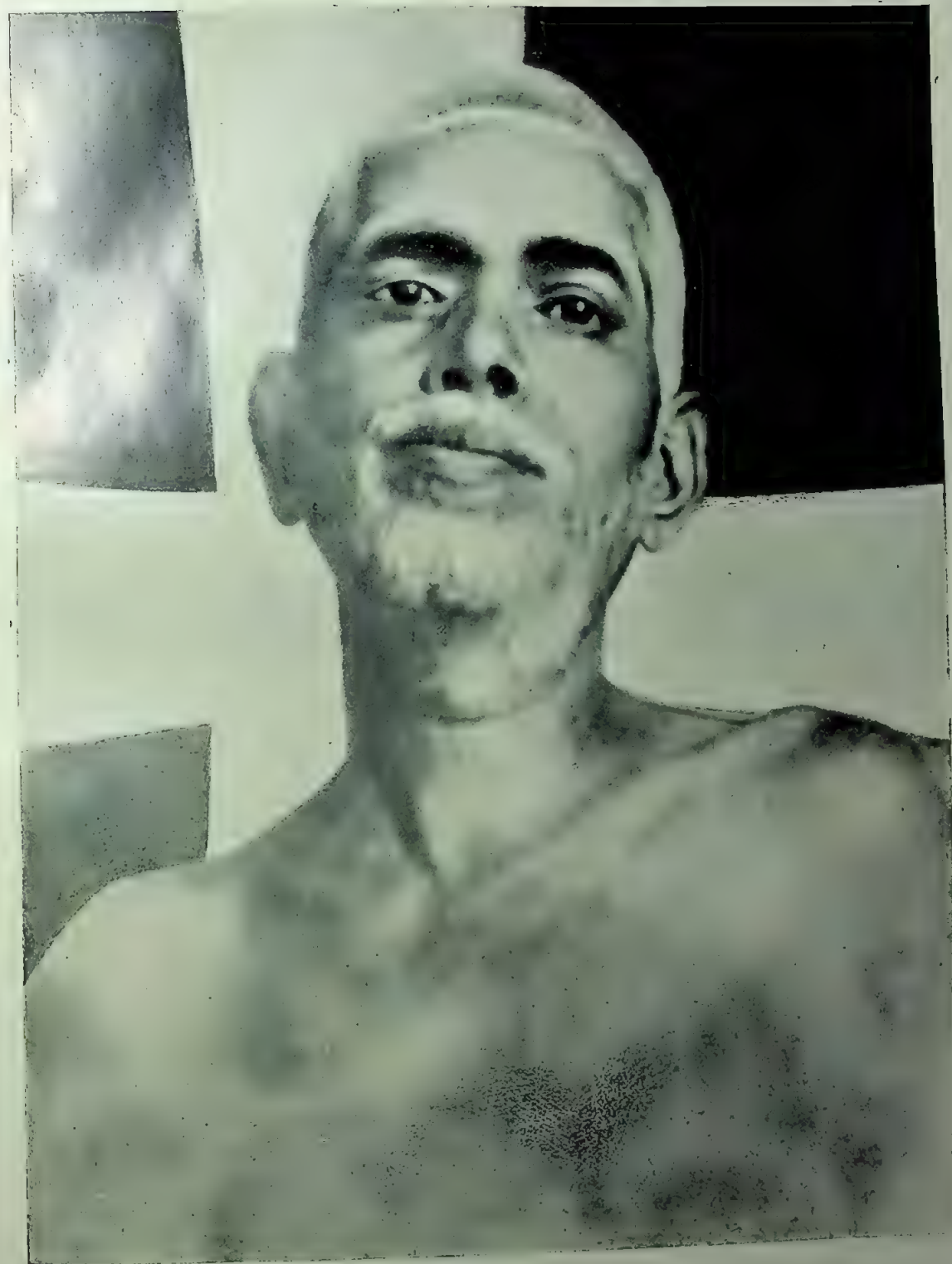
In the inmost core, the Heart
Shines as Brahman alone,
As 'I-I', the Self aware.
Enter deep into the Heart
By search for Self, or diving deep,
Or with breath under check.
Thus abide ever in Atman.

— *Sri Ramana Gita*, ch. II, v. 2.

In the innermost core, the Heart
Shines as Brahman alone.
As 'I' the Self awakes,
Enters deep into the Heart
By watch for Self, or diving deep.
Or with breath under cheek.
Thus abide ever in Atman.

— Sri Ramana Maharshi

THE
SRI RAMANA MATH
MADRAS





CAN A CHRISTIAN FOLLOW THE MAHARSHI?

By SAGITTARIUS

Can a Christian believe in the Maharshi? Even if he does, can he take him as his Guru and follow his path under his guidance?

First of all, what is meant by 'a Christian'? The term is commonly used in Christendom to mean 'one who believes in Christ', but it is not so used in India. Many a Hindu has belief in and reverence for Christ without ceasing to be a Hindu or claiming to be a Christian. By 'Christian', therefore, he means not merely one who believes in Christ but professes his religion and follows his teaching. This seems the more legitimate meaning. In any case it is the meaning that must be taken here, since it is only for such a one that the question can arise. The Hindu's attitude towards him is one of recognition and appreciation: "The boat you are sailing in is seaworthy and can bring you safely to port, but so can mine. I don't ask you to change over to mine but neither do I see any need to change over to yours." Can a Christian reciprocate? Can he show a like appreciation for non-Christian teachings and teachers? If not, is there any sincerity in the widespread modern demand for a 'dialogue' between the religions or is it just a euphemism for proselytism?

For a Christian the immediate obstacle to reciprocal recognition of any other religion may be Christ's own claim to unicity: "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me."¹ "If you believe in Christ," his retort will be, "it means believing everything he said, including this." The question is, therefore, whether Christ meant this literally and physically or whether it was one of the cryptic sayings



which puzzled his listeners and have continued to puzzle many of his followers ever since.

If it is understood physically and literally Christianity is *ipso facto* degraded to the level of phenomenology. Just something that once happened. When St. Paul spoke of "the Christ in you" he was according to their interpretation, indulging in mere poetic fancy. Christ is not within you, he was a separate individual outside you. There is no universality. Salvation is located in time and space.

The Christian mystic Angelus Silesius proclaimed the opposite, the higher point of view when he said: "Christ may be born a thousand times in Bethlehem, but if he be not born anew within your own heart you remain eternally forlorn." It is this inner Christ, the universal, formless, bodiless Christ, who is the 'Word', the 'only Son of God', who is unique, 'the way, the truth and the life', who is the only way by which one can come to God. With this understanding of 'Christ' the claim to unicity becomes a universal doctrinal statement. It no longer means: "This teacher is authentic and all others, past and

¹ St. John, XIV, 6.

future, are spurious." It no longer ties the hands of God. It means : "The Spirit is One." In this sense it must be true, for how can the Spirit be other than One ? In however many forms the Spirit may descend into the heart of man or become incarnate for the good of mankind, it is still the same Spirit, still the "only begotten son of God". Even humanly there is only one King Lear though many actors may play his part on the stage.

The right understanding of such sayings of Christ's depends on the meaning given to the word 'I'. Christ said : "I and my Father are One." He also said, "The Father is greater than me." On the face of it the two sayings are contradictory, but only if the word 'I' or 'me' is given the same meaning in both. It obviously should not be. The 'I' who is One with the Father is the universal Self, the 'I' of every man born, if only he knew it. If it were not it would not be universal but only one among many. The 'me' who is less than the Father is the phenomenal and individual Jesus-self born in a certain time and place, equipped with a certain temperament, endowed with certain human characteristics. The Maharshi's instruction was to discover the universal 'I' as the reality of oneself. But this implies discovering the unreality of the individual characteristics of mind, body and circumstance with which it is overgrown. The modern Christian mystic Joel Goldsmith says : "However, when you have transcended mind and thought, it is then that both mind and body are governed and controlled by the 'I' that is God."²

Therefore a Christian who understands the universal implication of the word 'I' can, without falling into the facile attitude of "all religions are the same", suspend judgement on other religions, recognizing merely that the 'I' which was embodied in full consciousness in Christ and unconsciously in most men may have been fully conscious in other embodiments also.

If he does not want to suspend judgement, he can of course study other religions from their own viewpoint, as set forth by their own exponents, without the idea at the back of his mind that he must somehow prove them wrong. Their viewpoint may differ from the Christian : one mountain path may veer west and another east ; they may cross and recross, but that does not prevent them both winding in the end to the summit.

Or he can simply look for evidence of true saints and sages in any religion, remembering Christ's saying that by their fruit ye shall know them. A path that leads to the goal must go the right way, whether it is the way you have been taught to go or not. The saint or sage is the end-product of religion. A religion that can produce them is *ipso facto* one that can supply what is required of it. To criticise its theory when it shows itself sound in practice would be futile.

However, our question was not only whether a Christian can believe in the Maharshi but whether he can follow him. A Christian may recognize a Hindu or Muslim saint as genuine but that does not mean that he can follow them. You can't be both a Christian and a Muslim or Hindu at the same time. Two mountain paths may both reach the summit, but if they run different ways you must choose which one to follow ; you can't follow both.

With the Maharshi, however, this practical difficulty does not arise because he was not a Hindu. He was not a Hindu in his path or his state or his teaching, and therefore the question of the validity of Hinduism has nothing to do with the question of the possibility of following him. Realization descended on him when he was a lad of sixteen through a spontaneous act of Self-enquiry. There was nothing specifically Hindu about it.³ In speak-

² *The Thunder of Silence*, p. 85, Allen & Unwin.

³ For his own description of it see '*Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*', p. 18-19, by Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co.

ing about it later he said : " I had read no books except the Periapuranam,⁴ the Bible⁵ and bits of Tayumanavar⁶ or Tevaram. My conception of Ishvara (God) was similar to that to be found in the Puranas (myths and chronicles) ; I had never heard of Brahman (the Absolute), samsara (manifestation) and so forth. I did not yet know that there was an Essence or Impersonal Real underlying everything and that Ishvara and I were both identical with It. Later, at Tiruvannamalai, as I listened to the Ribhu Gita and other sacred books, I learnt all this and found that the books were analysing and naming what I had felt intuitively without analysis or name."⁷

So also his final state was not specifically Hindu ; for the Hindus recognize one who has attained the final perfection of constant conscious Identity with the Universal Self as being beyond all social and religious categories : outside the castes, neither householder nor sannyasin, above the social order, belonging to no specific religion but at the source of them all.

The same freedom from forms showed in his teaching. After having attained Realization he read Hindu doctrine and might expound it in full technical detail, with quotations from the scriptures, to such Hindus as required technicalities, but to those who could understand simplicity and to foreign seekers his replies were simple, direct and universal : " Ask yourself ' Who am I ? '. Seek the true Self of you. Abide as that Self which you eternally are. " Be still and know that I am God." " It is not a question of becoming but being. Just be." Because utterly simple and direct, his teaching was universal, not the exclusive approach of any one religion.

However, another kind of doubt might arise. " I understand intellectually that the Self is One and that I am identical with that One. I admit that, not having realized this Identity, I need the aid of an apparently outer and separate person to enable me to do so. But

since for me this intermediary, this personification of the Impersonal, is Christ, can it be at the same time the Maharshi ? " This is a question which requires delicate handling. In the first place, it recognizes that the Absolute, Nameless, Impersonal Formless Self is One. Therefore the differences between various personifications of this One can only be formal, phenomenal, superficial, as the Maharshi indicated when he said, " The Sat-Guru is One." The sadhaka who is floundering in the phenomenal world and struggling to climb out of it may well find that he needs the aid of such a personification, but, even though he recognizes that both are personifications of the same One, can he follow the tradition laid down by one while seeking the aid and protection of another ?

In the same religion he certainly can. Not only that, but it is normal and usual to. A Hindu may strive through invocation of the Name of Rama or Krishna or both while dependent on the support of a living Guru. Many Buddhists have sought to attain the goal set for them by the Buddha by the Grace of one who had done so. Christian and Sufi seekers have also sought the guidance of a Saint. The benefit of this is due to the phenomenal power or what the Hindus would call the ' saguna aspect ' of a Master. In his nirguna, qualityless or impersonal aspect he is formless and One with the Absolute ; therefore it is through his formal or qualified aspect that contact is established with the psychosomatic system, the body-mind complex, of the aspirant. This is obvious so long as the Master himself wears a body. In cases like that of Christ or the Maharshi where he still remains a guide after shedding the body this saguna aspect still continues, though only in its more subtle form. Incidentally this explains the importance of Christ's Resurrection and his

⁴ A book of the lives of Tamil saints.

⁵ He went to an American Mission School.

⁶ A Tamil Poet-Saint.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 6. 23-24.

promise to return. Even the saguna aspect of a Master, that is his subtle form, transcends time and space and it might therefore be argued that the guidance of the most ancient and distant Master the world has ever known should be as potent as that of one who still treads the earth to-day; but in fact it is not so. Spiritual influences are to some extent maintained by the ardour of those who receive and transmit them and dissipated by their tepidity. The radiance or vibration of the Master's influence may diminish in potency. A contemporary or recent Master may, therefore, give powerful aid in following one more

distant. This has normally been so. It is so to-day. The invisible support of the Maharshi is a tremendous power to be tapped by those who seek.

As I have already said, it would not be a simple matter to tap this phenomenal power of a Master in a case where the technicalities of the path he prescribed clashed with those of the path already being followed, and this would in most cases rule out a Guru from a different religion to one's own. But the simplicity and universality of the Maharshi's path is such that it has no technicalities and therefore clashes with no religion.

Sri Ramana Maharshi never went to the people. The people went to him, particularly those who were called. No person who had a yearning for the higher truth and sought after higher values failed to go to him. He was like the sun diffusing its rays of light all round. Those who were open received his light and his grace and were set moving on the path of Truth-Realization. He spoke very little but his very look dissolved all doubts and removed all confusion. The mind in his presence used to attain a gradual stillness, all the waves of thought fading out, leaving behind a serene quiet. This rush of quietness was commonly experienced. It used to be particularly prominent during the meditation hour in the evening when Sri Maharshi used to sit in majestic repose, his eyes emitting grace and light.

It is rather difficult for me to say anything more about this. Spiritual experiences, even if they are intense and continuous, are not capable of precise description. The influence that they exercise on the outlook and character of the individual and the great new turn that they give to one's life alone count. I have had the unique privilege of paying respect at the feet of Sri Ramana Maharshi. Every time I went to him I returned stronger and with a deeper faith in the validity of the truths embedded in our scriptures. I cannot say in what particular way I have been influenced by Sri Maharshi. But the impulsion to serve God and man got strengthened every time I went into his presence.

— M. BHAKTAVATSALAM,
Chief Minister of Madras.

SHANKARA AND RAMANA

By DR. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN



That there is no difference whatsoever between the teachings of Bhagavatpada Shankara and those of Bhagavan Sri Ramana will be evident to anyone who has any acquaintance with the writings of these two Great Masters. Advaita experience is what they teach, and not any system of philosophy or school of thought. It is only when Advaita is wrongly assumed to be a system among systems of philosophy that it would appear that Ramana's teachings could not be contained within Advaita. Sri B. V. Narasimhaswamy makes the following remarks in Chapter xiii of his biography of Bhagavan, *Self Realisation*: "When the intellect gives place to intuition, there is no difference in the ultimate realisation, be it that of an Advaitin, Dvaitin, or Visishtadvaitin, a Saivite or Sakta. The works dealt with by him (i.e. Bhagavan Ramana) by way of translation into Tamil or adaptation are, however, of the Advaitic school". The assumption here seems to be that Advaita is a school co-ordinate with Dvaita, etc. But, then, why did Bhagavan select Advaita works for translation into Tamil? The reason obviously is that Advaita, according to him, does not stand for any limited or partial perspective, but for the plenary truth which includes and transcends all the pluralistic and quasi-pluralistic formulations of it. When Sri Kapali Sastri seeks to distinguish Ramana's teaching from Shankara's in his Commentary on *Sad-darshanam* (Asramam Publication, 1931, p. 17),

he does so because of the wrong assumption already referred to. The same is the case with the statement made by 'Who' in his Tamil commentary on Ramana's *Ulladu Narpadu* (Asramam Publication, 1950, p. 3) that the teaching contained in the *Ulladu Narpadu* is meant only for the followers of Advaita.

In order to understand the teachings of Ramana and Shankara, it is very essential to remember that Advaita is not a sectarian doctrine. Advaita is the culmination of all religious sects and philosophical schools. It is the common end of all philosophical endeavour and religious practice. The pluralistic systems are opposed to one another; and they labour under the misconception that Advaita is opposed to them. But Advaita has no quarrel with the schools of pluralism, for the principle underlying it is non-quarrel. In his *Mandukya-karika*, Gaudapada, the guru of the guru of Shankara, observes that the dualists who obstinately cling to their respective views contradict one another, whereas the Advaitin has no conflict with any of them. As non-duality

In this article the distinguished author, one of the leading philosophical exponents of the philosophy of Advaita in the world today, (for a note on whom see p. 198 of our issue of Oct. 1964) is speaking from the doctrinal viewpoint. When it comes to methodology, however, there is a vast difference between Sri Shankara and Sri Ramana, the method taught by the former, largely based on the Mahavakyas, being strictly orthodox, while that enjoined by Sri Ramana is open not only to non-Brahmins but even to non-Hindus.

is the supreme truth, duality is to be regarded as a variant thereof ; the dualists see duality both in the Absolute and in the relative phenomena ; but non-duality is not in conflict with the dualistic position. Commenting on Gaudapada's teaching, Shankara says that there is no conflict between Advaita and Dvaita, even as there could be no strife between one's organism as a whole and its parts. Advaita, in short, stands for the highest truth which is free from all disputations (*avivāda*). What is true of the philosophical systems *vis-a-vis* Advaita is true also of the religious cults. To quote Swami Vivekananda, "A peculiarity of Advaita is that from its very start it is non-destructive. This is another glory, the boldness to preach : 'Do not disturb the faith of any, even of those who through ignorance have attached themselves to lower forms of worship'. That is what it says, do not disturb, but help every one to get higher and higher..... This idea is not clearly found in any religious system. They are all parts equally struggling to attain the whole. The existence of the part is only for this. So, from the very first, Advaita had no antagonism with the various sects existing in India."

It is interesting to note in this connection that the traditions relating to Shankara's life are unanimous in saying that the great Acharya established on secure foundations the six major faiths constituting Hinduism. In a work called the *Jivanmuktanandalahari*, Shankara declares that the one who has realised the truth of non-duality gets along with the followers of the different faiths with perfect equanimity, impartiality and understanding.

The critic may ask : Does not Shankara criticise in his extensive writings the doctrines of the pluralistic schools and the dogmas of religious cults ? The answer is simple. When Shankara points out the defects and inconsistencies in the various schools and cults, he does so not in the spirit of a partisan, but with a view to make them whole. As we have pointed out already, partisanship is incom-

patible with Advaita. The remark that the Advaitin has no position of his own is quite pertinent. He is not interested in building up a system of thought ; his main interest is in pointing the direction by following which one will eventually come to realise the plenary truth. The philosophical schools and the faiths, whatever be their composition and character, can be of help if they are made to free themselves, as far as possible, from their dogmatisms and fanaticisms. The function of criticism performed by Advaita teachers should be viewed, not as a destructive procedure, but as a constructive help. This they are enabled to do because Advaita is not a closed system or a circumscribed set of beliefs. When the term *Advaita* is translated as *non-dual-ism*, it is worthwhile to remember, the negative prefix — *non* applies not only to *dual* but also to *ism*. Advaita is not an *ism* ; in fact, even the expression *Advaita* is an approximation to the truth, not the truth itself.

As an illustration of the popular misconception about Shankara's teaching and Bhagavan Ramana's acceptance of the all-comprehensive truth of Advaita, we may cite a reported conversation between a questioner and Bhagavan. The questioner asked : "The Supreme Spirit (*Brahman*) is Real. The world (*jagat*) is illusion' is the stock phrase of Sri Shankaracharya. Yet others say, 'The world is reality'. Which is true ?" In his reply, Bhagavan said that both the statements are true, but at different levels of understanding and experience, which is exactly the teaching of Shankara's Advaita. The absolute truth is that the supreme Spirit is non-dual. As Bhagavan put it, "There is only Being in Self-realization, and nothing but Being". But, he adds, the term 'reality' is used also in a different sense and is applied loosely by some thinkers to objects. It is as a concession to them that degrees of reality are recognised in Advaita : apparent reality (*pratibhasika satya*) belongs to the contents of dreams and illusions ; empirical reality (*vyavaharika satya*),

to the things of the objective world in the waking state ; the absolute reality (*paramar-thika satya*) is, of course, the non-dual Self. When one has realised the absolute Truth, it will be evident, there is no sense in talking about degrees of truth or of reality (see 'Talks', 1958, pp. 49-50).

On another occasion, Bhagavan explained to a devotee the three modes of approach to the metaphysical problem of creation, as comprehended in Advaita. (1) The highest mode is the *ajativada* as formulated by Gaudapada. According to this mode, there is no creation, no dissolution, no bondage, no release, no one striving for release. 'Nothing whatever is born' is the truth. (2) The next mode is the *drishti-srishti-vada*, according to which creation is simultaneous, as in dreams. (3) the last mode is *srishti-drishti-vada* which holds that there is creation in stages or graded creation ('Talks', p. 421). The difference between the second and the third mode is explained very clearly by Bhagavan in the *Vichara Sangraham (Self-Enquiry)* thus : the theory of creation in sequence is taught for the sake of the low grade of aspirants, who have just begun to enquire, but who are still obsessed with the idea that the world is real. For the benefit of those aspirants who have progressed to the higher levels, the other view of simultaneous creation is presented. According to this view, the world arose like a dream on account of one's own thoughts induced by the defect of not knowing oneself as the non-dual Spirit (Brahman). To those who have gained the plenary realisation there is no problem, at all, of having to explain creation, for there is no creation. And so, this standpoint — if standpoint it may be called — is that of *ajati* (non-birth, non-creation). The term *ajati* also is but an approximation to the truth, and not the truth itself. As Gaudapada points out in the *Mandukya-karika* (iv, 74) *ajati* is meaningful only so long as *jati* carries meaning ; and, that is so in the empirical world alone. The absolute truth is that no word can dis-

nate or describe the Self. The purpose of the expression '*ajati*' is only to make us understand that the Self is not what appears to be born. Here again one cannot but be struck by the complete identity of the teachings of Bhagavan Ramana and Acharya Gaudapada.

We may refer to another piece of conversation which shows that Ramana's experience is Advaita-experience, and that the great sage arrived at this experience without any formal study of even Advaita texts.

The conversation is between the well-known French Orientalist, Olivier Lacombe and Bhagavan :

O.L. : Is Maharshi's teaching the same as Shankara's ?

Bhagavan : Maharshi's teaching is only an expression of his own experience and realization. Others find that it tallies with Sri Shankara's.

O. L. : Quite so. Can it be put in other ways to express the same realization ?

Bhagavan : A realised person will use his own language. *Silence* is the best language (Talks, p. 182).

Not only has Bhagavan Ramana implicitly recognised the identity of his teaching with that of Shankara, but also he has explicitly stated that there is complete identity. Bhagavan has rendered into Tamil Shankara's *Hymn to Dakshinamurti*, *Atma-bodha*, *Vivekachudamani*, and *Drig-drishya-viveka*. In the invocatory verses which he has added to the first two of the above-mentioned works, Bhagavan declares : (1) "That Shankara who came as Dakshinamurti to grant peace to the great ascetics, who revealed his true state of silence, and who has expounded the nature of the Self in this Hymn, abides in me." (2) "Is the teacher Shankara, who grants the knowledge of the Self, other than the Self ? Remaining in my heart as the Self, he who utters the Tamil today — who is he other than that one himself ?"

The original works of Bhagavan are veritable gems of Advaita literature. The two

prose-pieces, "Self-Enquiry" and "Who am I?" which were composed at the beginning of the present century, set forth the technique of enquiry into the nature of the Self, which is the direct means to release, according to Advaita. The *Ulladu Narpadu*, along with its Supplement, expounds the truth of non-duality the Self that is unconditioned pure existence, and also the disciplines that lead to the realisation of the Self. The same teaching is the theme of the *Upadesa Saram* which ends by declaring that real austerity (*tapas*) is the realization of That which remains as the sub-

strate when all trace of 'I' is gone. The purport of even the devotional hymns to Arunachala sung by Bhagavan, as of the many *stotras* of Shankara, is Advaita-Experience.

Obeisance to the succession of gurus, beginning with the Lord Siva, having Shankara in the middle, and extending so far upto Ramana in our own day!

sadasiva-samarambham

Shankaracharya-madhyamam,

ramanacharya-paryantam

vande guru-paramparam.

Sani	Kuja		Chandra Kethu
Guru	RASI		Mandi
Ravi Rahu	Budha Sukra	Lagna	

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

Born at TIRUCHUZHI near MADURAI
on 29/30 - 12 - 1879 at 1.00 A. M. (L. M. T.)
& 1.17 A. M. (I. S. T.)

Long. 78°-15' East. Lat. 9°-50' North.

Ayanamsa 9—20°-43'.

Guru	Sani	Kuja	
	BHAVA		Chandra Kethu
Rahu Ravi			Mandi
Budha	Sukra	Lagna	

Guru		Kethu	Chandra
Budha	NAVAMSA		Sukra
Mandi			
Sani	Rahu Kuja	Lagna	Ravi

Punarvasu 3rd pada : Balance of GURU Dasa at Birth 4 years, 1 m, 20 days.

The above is the horoscope of Sri Ramana in Hindu style. His horoscope in Western style appears on page 60 of this issue. *Astrologers are invited to send in their comments on it.*

SIVANANDALAHARI

It would be logical to say that the paths of knowledge and devotion are incompatible, since Knowledge implies realization of the non-dual Self while devotion requires two—one to worship and One to be worshipped. However, logic does not always work. Human nature is not simple, and the same mind which, holding itself in abeyance, feels non-dual Identity to be all may also melt in devotion before Him who is that All. A sign of this is that Shankara Acharya, the classical Advaitin and Vedantist, also composed devotional songs; another is that Ramana Maharshi, the great Advaitin of modern times, wrote in his 'Marital Garland of Letters to Sri Arunachala' ¹ one of the greatest allegorical love-poems of all times and all religions.

He also selected ten verses from Sri Shankara's 'Hymn to Siva', of which Prof. T. M. P. Mahadevan's translation and commentary is reviewed in our July 1964 issue, and arranged them in an order which seemed to him effective. These ten verses are given below, headed by their serial numbers in the original poem.

61

When the flow of the mind reaches the lotus-feet of the Lord of soul ² and remains there always, just as the seeds of the *ankola* tree adhere to the tree, the needle to the magnet, the chaste wife to her husband and the river to the ocean, that is called devotion.

76

Devotion, like the cloud in the sky of the great Lord, emits a shower of bliss; he whose mind is a lake to be filled by this reaps the full harvest of life: he and he alone.

83

Not the slightest happiness accrues from worshipping gods who are born and die; of this there is no doubt. They who here adore the birthless, eternal Lord of Parvati ² are the fortunate ones: they it is who attain supreme happiness.

6

Will pot or lump of clay, will atom, whether of smoke, fire or mountain, whether of cloth or thread, ³ will any of these serve as a bulwark against dread death? You only strain your throat unnecessarily by logic-chopping. Hasten, you who are wise, to worship the lotus-feet of Sambhu ² and attain the supreme happiness.

65

Oh Consort of Parvati ²! what is impossible for him whose mind worships Thy feet? At

sight of him Yama flees, fearing another kick in the chest ⁴; the gods wave lamps consisting of the flaming gems set in their crowns, and, ⁵ the bride, clasps him in unyielding embrace.

10

Whether one is born a man or a god, a wild animal of the mountain or forest, a mosquito, a cow, or a worm, a bird or any other creature, what does it matter in what body, so long as the heart bathes endlessly in the supreme bliss of contemplation of Thy lotus-feet?

12

Tell me, what difference does it make whether one lives in a cave or house or in the open, in a forest or on top of a mountain, in water or in fire? He, Oh Sambhu, ² is happy whose mind dwells always at Thy feet; that indeed is yoga and he the supreme yogi.

9

Oh Lord of Uma! ² what a fool he is who enters a deep water-tank or a fearful uninhabited forest or roams over a high mountain to gather flowers! ⁶ He does not know how to

¹ Quoted in our issue of October 1964.

² A term for Siva.

³ These are conventional terms used in Hindu logic and argument. The meaning is: Will academic philosophy help you in facing death?

⁴ This refers to the myth of Markendeya, a devotee who overcame Yama, the God of death.

⁵ Liberation.

⁶ Flowers to be offered up in worship. The water-tank is included because it is there that lotus flowers would be gathered.

live here in happiness, offering up to Thee the single lotus of his heart.

11

What difference does it make, Oh Lord, whether one be a student, a householder, a renunciate or a homeless wanderer? ⁷ Oh Sambhu, Lord of souls! when one's heart-lotus becomes Thine, Thou becomest his and dost bear the burden of his life.

91

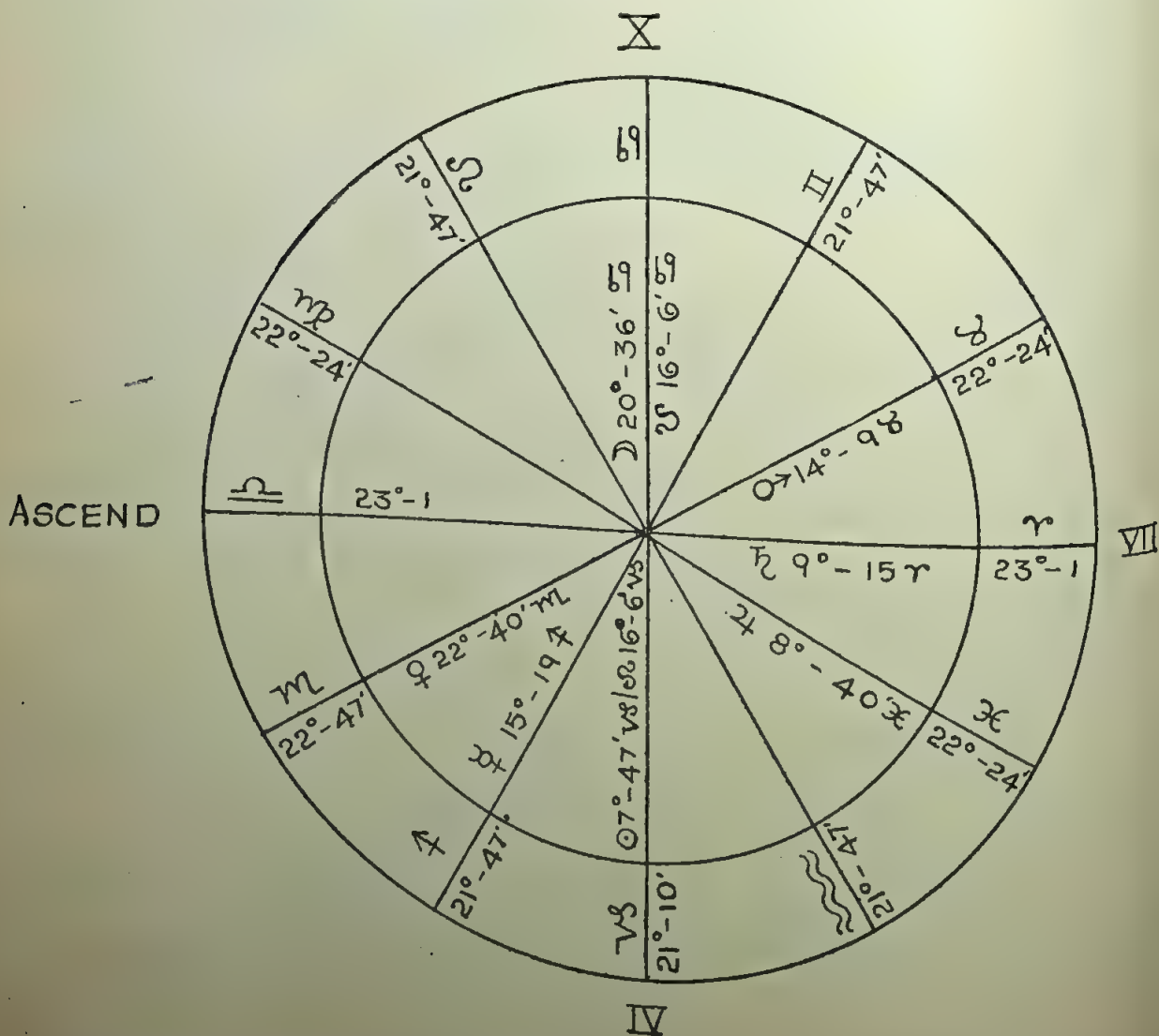
O Crescent-crested Lord, through Thy Grace the beginningless ignorance in the heart has been dispelled and the joy of Knowledge has taken its place. I meditate on and adore Thy lotus-feet, bearers of welfare and bestowers of Liberation.

⁷ These are the four traditional stages of Hindu life, according to the classical model.

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

Born on 29/30-12-1879 at 1-00 A.M./L.M.T. (1-17 A.M. I.S.T.) at 78°-15' E—9°-50' N.

[TIRUCHUZH near Madurai, S. India.]



The above is the horoscope of Sri Ramana in Western style. His horoscope in Hindu style appears on page 58 of this issue.

JNANI,¹ PROPHET AND AVATAR²

By ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN

Jnana marga is the 'path of knowledge', by which is meant not theoretical knowledge but pure spiritual understanding. A Jnani is a Man of Knowledge or a Sage in the highest meaning of the term, that is to say one who abides in constant conscious Identity with Universal Being. In Sufi terminology, he is one who is in a state of unbroken realization of *tawhid* or Oneness and *ittihad* or Identity, one who has passed through *fana* or 'extinction' to *fana'l fana*, 'the extinction of extinction' and is established in *baqa* or 'stabilisation'. This is a very rare phenomenon.

An Avatar, as proclaimed in the Hindu tradition, is also a rare phenomenon. The classical enunciation of the doctrine is by Krishna when he says in the Bhagavad Gita: "Whenever dharma is obscured and adharma prevails I manifest myself."³ This implies a threefold distinction between an Avatar and a Jnani, although of course it is to be remembered that an Avatar may be a Jnani and a Jnani an Avatar.

In the first place, an Avatar is regarded not as a human being struggling up towards Enlightenment and finally breaking through the veil of illusion but as a Divine Being assuming the veil temporarily for the welfare of mankind: that is to say not an ascent but a descent. In this respect the doctrine has an affinity with the Christian doctrine of Christ the Saviour, the Tibetan doctrine of Incarnate Buddhas and to some extent, the Mahayana doctrine of Bodhisattvas.

In the second place, the Avatar is, in the highest sense of the word, a functionary. He is a Divine Descent or Incarnation for the specific purpose of sustaining or restoring dharma. A Jnani may or may not perform



any visible function. He may or may not be recognized for what he is. Chuang Tsu often refers to unrecognized Sages. Buddha said of his followers: "There are bhikkhus in this company who are Arahants: having extinguished the corruptions, completed the ascetic life, done what was to be done, laid down their burden, attained their goal, utterly destroyed the fetters of existence, and who are delivered by right insight."⁴ Al Hallaj was crucified for claiming to be what he was, and other Sufis were more restrained, remaining, some of them, prudently inconspicuous. It is noteworthy that the followers of Ramakrishna regard him as an Avatar come to restore a decadent Hinduism. Many of the followers of the Maharshi regard him as an Avatar come to bring the direct path of Self-enquiry to mankind at large, Hindus and others. Nor is this to be dismissed as a posthumous development. In both cases there are ample records of those who held this view during their lifetime.

¹ Pronounced more like Gnvani.—Editor.

² Many writers use the form 'Avatara'. but since the final 'a' is not normally pronounced and this is a practical, not an academic journal, we prefer the shorter form.—Editor.

³ IV, 7.

⁴ Karandaka Sutta et alia.

This second distinction may make an Avatar seem more important than a Jnani, especially to people who value action more than being and function more than state. The third distinction, however, restores the balance by showing that the Avatar need not necessarily have the total Realization of the Jnani. He may be an Incarnation of the Cosmic Supreme Being not concerned with the metaphysical Absolute. For the Jnani, it is to be remembered, the entire universe with all its Avatars and the people they come to save is a dream from which he has awakened. The Avatar, being engrossed in his function, need not be in constant awareness of this ultimate truth. Indeed, it might make for greater concentration on his function and therefore greater efficiency if he were not. The Hindus have therefore a conception of 'partial Avatars', as one might call them. In fact, some of them hold, as the modern bhakta Dilip Kumar Roy has declared in his books, that all Avatars are in some way partial and limited except Sri Krishna who is the only complete Avatar. It is noteworthy that on one occasion when the Maharshi was asked whether he was an Avatar or not his answer was simply a rebuke to the questioner for attaching importance rather to function than state, rather to doing than being: "An Avatar is only a manifestation of one aspect of God, whereas a Jnani is God Himself."

The prophet in the Semitic tradition is functionally parallel to the Avatar in the Hindu; but there is a difference. He also is primarily a functionary. He comes, like the Avatar, to purify, restore or re-enunciate religion, but he is known not as an Incarnation or Descent but a *rasool*, 'one sent', that is a messenger. In the dualistic monotheism of Semitic religion there is no room for an openly recognized doctrine of Identity or for an Incarnation. For the same reason, it is unnecessary for the prophet or messenger to be a Jnani, in a state of realized Identity. For him to be so would indeed be bad economy of material and therefore inartistic and inefficient. He would

have to keep his high state and complete knowledge secret from his followers. It is obvious, therefore, that he can do his job better without it.

Christ claimed to be an Incarnation and enunciated the doctrine of Identity — "I and my Father are One". But the Jews rejected him because of it and condemned him as a blasphemer. The Quran speaks of him as a prophet, though it does cryptically allow for a distinction in referring to him alone among the prophets as *Ruhu'llah*, the 'Spirit of God'. It may be that this describes his state while 'prophet' describes his function. In any case, this claim to Identity took Christianity out of the pure Semitic tradition and gave it a certain affinity with Hinduism.

In speaking of Mohammed the Quran retains the traditional Semitic version of the prophet as messenger: "We have sent you a messenger who is one of yourselves to recite our communications to you."⁵ And to Mohammed himself it says: "And the messengers whom We sent before you were only men to whom We granted revelation."⁶

This means that either Mohammed had not Self-realization in its true and ultimate sense of realized Identity with Supreme Being or that he kept it carefully concealed from his followers. The former seems the more likely. The chief reason for saying this is that there are numerous references to Mohammed in the Quran and none of them imply realized Identity, while a number of them do imply its absence. Even apart from that, there are a number of incidents in his life which leave little room for doubt. To take only one of them: when the first of the revelations which were to grow into the Holy Quran came to him he received it as a message through an intermediary, the Angel Gabriel, and was cast into great distress, about which he confided only to his wife, wondering whether in fact it meant that he had been chosen a prophet or

⁵ *Qur'an*, 11, 151.

⁶ *Qur'an*, XXI, 7.

whether it did not come from an evil source. This is a story which carries conviction, even apart from the fact that it comes from Al Amin, 'the Trustworthy', as Mohammed was called even before he became a prophet. It is obviously not play-acting. But it is equally obviously not the reaction of a Realized Man.

And indeed, we have Mohammed's own word for it that he was not a Jnani in the sense that the Maharshi or Buddha or Christ were, that is to say in a constant state of conscious Identity. In a well known hadith he says: "I have a time with Allah during which no angel or inspired prophet is equal to me." This may indicate a state of 'mystic union' in which not even the highest forms of created life can intervene; but in any case, however it may be interpreted, he himself went on to say, with characteristic integrity, that it was not permanent but that at other times he had to make do with the felicity derived from one of his wives.

Through his instrumentality, however, a religion was established and paths were laid down, and there is no reason for doubting that they go the whole way. Some may be inclined to doubt this statement. Indeed, the Editor of *The Mountain Path* declared in a recent editorial that "no one can guide others farther than he has gone himself."⁷ My reply would be that there is a difference between the function of a guru and that of a prophet. The Islamic creed is that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is His messenger. To assert that the message cannot be complete would be a criticism not of the messenger but of God who sent him. It is well known even among non-Muslims that Mohammed did not write or compose the Quran but recited it as revealed to him in a state of trance. It contains no explicit statement of the Supreme Identity; nevertheless there is ample evidence that some of the Sufi saints have attained a state of *baqa* or 'stabilization' in realized Identity. The very doctrine of *baqa* as the completion of

fana or 'extinction' indicates that this was understood as their goal. This explains how it is that some of the Sufi saints have alleged that they have gone beyond the Prophet and that the state of saint is higher than that of prophet. As the statement of the Maharshi quoted earlier in this article indicates it may even (if one uses the more correct term 'Sage' or Jnani instead of 'saint') be higher or more complete than that of Avatar.

A recent writer quotes the great Sufi philosopher Ibn Arabi as refuting this claim. "If a Prophet maketh an utterance which transcendeth the scope of his function as Law-Giver, then he doth so inasmuch as he is a Saint and a Gnostic, for his station as one possessing Gnosis is more universal and perfect than his station as a Messenger or Law-Giver. Thus if thou hearest any man of God say — or if he is reported as saying — that sainthood is higher than prophethood, his meaning is as we have just explained. Or if he say that the Saint is above the Prophet and the Messenger, he is referring to one person, and meaneth that the Messenger is more universal in virtue of his sainthood than in virtue of his apostle-prophethood. He does not mean that those Saints who are followers of the Messenger are higher than him."⁸

If read carefully it will be seen that this is no refutation. Indeed it admits that the station of the Gnostic (Jnani) is more perfect and universal than that of the prophet. This implies that the state of the prophet is not universal or perfect, because if it were nothing could be more so. There is no more perfect than perfect. All that it claims is that a prophet may also be a Jnani and if so is more perfect as such than as prophet. Whether he may be or not, there is certainly, as explained earlier in this article, no need to be, and there is ample evidence, as instanced above, that Mohammed was not.

⁷ July, 1965, p. 145.

⁸ *A Moslem Saint of the Twentieth Century*, p. 161, by Martin Lings, Allen & Unwin.

INTRODUCING THE MAHARSHI TO POLAND

I met him in a bookshop, opening a book at random — Sri Ramana Maharshi ! For the first time in my life the buying of a book seemed a painfully protracted business. I could scarcely believe that one could buy this book like any other, that it was really for sale. To leave the bookshop quickly with this book in my hand, my own, not to be taken away ! . . .

On my way home I opened the book several times to be sure that I was not dreaming, that the picture of him was as beautiful as when I saw it first. I looked at it sidelong, almost furtively, afraid to frighten away the beauty, to lose it irretrievably. Who was he ?

Others have felt the same : I was not suffering from a hallucination. In her book 'The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi', the Polish devotee Uma Devi writes : "Strange things happen to quite different people coming from different social circles. They need not have mystic leanings or be peculiarly sensitive. A look at Maharshi's picture, however accidental and casual, creates in them an upheaval and a permanent inner change, shallow or deep according to the individual. Hence the innumerable requests for a copy of the picture which finds its way into many homes, offices and workshops. Wherever it goes it exerts its fascination, rationally inexplicable, nevertheless real."



I look at the picture . . . He is so near and so beautiful. What is this light that shines through so many layers ? How can one disbelieve the many stories about the Maharshi, the testimony of people who have seen him with their own eyes, who lived with him for days and months and years ? People of various religions and races — Hindus, Muslims, Christians, some of them simple folk and some highly educated ? Who can express in words the infinite silence, depth and power of his presence ?

In India high value is attached to simple silent abiding in the proximity of a holy man. No questions asked, no philosophical discussions. Sat Sangh, the company of Saints, abiding in the proximity of a Yogi or a Sage, is for an Indian motive enough for long and

Abbreviated from an article written in Polish by Jerzy Cwiernia and published in the Catholic journal 'Kierunki' (Directions). The editor of that journal poses the question : "Why have we decided to publish this article in spite of our disagreement with the author in his statement of the equal value of different religious systems . . . ?" And he answers : "Because we believe in acquainting the European mind with the most essential experiences of a basically spiritual culture." That there can be a Catholic press in Communist Poland and alike signs to be welcomed.

arduous pilgrimages.¹ In spiritual life Sat Sangh is the supreme help, the bright light on the path to Truth.

The Rishis and saints are loved and worshipped by the millions because they are living milestones on the path to our real homeland, the kingdom of Truth. They are the Living God in human form, the Gurus who lead men out of darkness . . . The Maharshi is among the greatest in the whole history of India. He was termed a Jnani and a Jivan Mukta in Sanskrit, which denotes spiritual wisdom and Oneness with Truth, merging of consciousness in the changeless and timeless Reality, the actual realization of Christ's commandment: "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect."

We all know that there is happiness, but what it is we do not know. We do not ask what is suffering: We know that well enough. We think of happiness but do not feel it and therefore do not know it. Not knowing it, we look for it in things and achievements. Sometimes it comes unexpected and fleeting and we cannot hold it or describe it. Sometimes we find a shadow of it in art or beauty. There is a ray of happiness in beauty; it may be a pointer—but is aesthetic satisfaction happiness? Is happiness not something infinitely more?

Do not desires, which often veil beauty, bar the way to happiness also? For happiness do we not need permanence? In seeking happiness we often merely seek for the permanence of what is pleasant, the continuity of perishable things: and that is obviously impossible. For thousands of years, in many lands and cultures, in the holy books of India and China, Judaea, Greece and Rome, in various languages and forms, one eternal truth has been proclaimed: the truth about the cause of suffering and the state of happiness free from suffering, whether one call it Tao, Reality, God, Brahman, He Who Is, or Sat-Chit-Ananda, Being-Consciousness-Bliss.

Our civilization is based on things. Things give us pleasure; things cause us pain. An ever-growing avalanche of things to shun or to pursue seems to be the future of our civilization. In an industrialized society man's place is fixed. What he is and what he has depends on what he does. His relations with others are determined by his position in society. In the Western world in particular the industrial and economic structure is at the root of all individual relations. As a reaction, world improvement seems to be the constant pre-occupation of Western man. When a European visited the Maharshi his first question was: "How can I help the world?" And the Maharshi's answer, so characteristic of his teaching, would be: "Help yourself first; thereby you will help the world. The world is not separate from you."

We must beware of taking this reply superficially. "What is the greatest good that a man can have? Happiness born of peace. There can be peace only where storms and turmoils are no more, and these are created by thoughts which clash and struggle in our minds. When the mind—which is the 'me'—is no more there is perfect peace. Man will not find peace or happiness until he quietens the mind and dissolves the 'I', the person he thinks himself to be."

'I', 'mine'—the sense of difference and separation from the rest of the world—the gnawing sense of loneliness, self-centredness and undue importance given to our unique and unrepeatable person represented by the pronoun 'I'—are so ingrained in our Western culture that it is not easy for us to grasp what in actual experience is the meaning of statements such as 'the disappearance of the ego' or 'the extinction of the mind' or 'the destruction of the individuality'. How can anybody's disappearance be a means to his happiness or to his finding the Truth? When the

¹For many Westerners also who make the long pilgrimage to Arunachala—Editor.

person is not there who will know? Who will be happy?

The Maharshi answers: "The I-thought is the first thought that arises in the mind. Unless the I-thought arises no other thought will. Go back to this sense of 'I' and trace it to its source, and you will discover for yourself that it is the first thought to arise and the last to disappear."

Paul Brunton asked the Maharshi: "Can the search for the 'I' be undertaken by everybody?"

To which he replied: "Yes, every one can go within himself ever deeper until all sense of 'I' disappears."

Brunton: Then what remains? Does one become an unconscious or mindless moron?

Maharshi: Far from it. On the contrary, one merges into a consciousness that is immense, immortal, all-wise. All that is needed is to know oneself as one really is and discover one's true Self.

Brunton: But will the sense of an individual 'I' remain?

Maharshi: This sense of an individual I is personal; it depends on brain and body. When a man finds his Self something arises from within and takes charge of him. This something is beyond thought. It is endless, eternal and divine. Some call it the Kingdom of Heaven, some Spirit, some Nirvana. The Hindus call it Mukti, 'Liberation'. Call it what you like, the man to whom it happens does not lose himself but on the contrary finds himself at last. Until a man starts out on this great journey of discovery in search of his highest being, uncertainty, doubt and suffering will be his constant companions. Of what use is all other knowledge when you do not know who you are? Can there be a more worthy enterprise than the search within for the essential? Yet people shun it.

The Maharshi also said: "To know yourself Liberated ask who it is that is not liberated. Knowledge of oneself and one's real

state is Liberation. Only Self-Knowledge gives freedom; nothing else. Constant turning the mind inwards is the quest for the Self (atma-vichara) while its contemplation is dhyana. Outside the Self nothing is of value. To find it you have to forget everything that you have learnt.

Tat Twam Asi — That Thou art; Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma — All is Brahman; Aham Brahmasmi — I am Brahman: these terse sentences contain the summits of India's philosophical teaching and mystic realization, of all her yoga systems and experimental search for the Vast beyond the mind. The same is the essence of the Maharshi's teaching, which is not a set of dogmas or a theory of existence. Thousands of years of inner search, of which the Upanishads are the great witness, all the profundity of Shankara and Patanjali, have found both their full corroboration and their glorious living example in the Maharshi. He teaches the operational way to Truth. He is not interested in mere logical or speculative formulas, nor does he demand faith or rely on revelation: whatever he says he knows from his own experience. We can learn from him through our own experience but never by accumulating and organizing in our minds the many statements he has made.

The Maharshi teaches that in the search for the Self one must have an open mind free from pre-conceived ideas. "All that you may say comes from the mind, which shines with a light borrowed from the Self. Isn't it pride and arrogance for the mind to make statements about that of which it is a very small and limited part? Instead of wasting time on idle speculation devote yourself to the search of truth which dwells eternally within you."

The great truths are not to be proved but experienced. "True knowledge flows from within, not from outside. Realization is not hearsay, it is direct perception." He also says: "The highest knowledge is the direct manifestation of Reality in which knower and known are one."

We read in the Upanishads : "He who knows everything to be his own self, who has seen that all is one, to him there can be no disaster or despair. Nothing can be hidden from him who has seen all in the Self and the Self in all." The Maharshi is the epitome of the Vedas and the Upanishads, of Buddha and Shankara.

The Silence and words of the Sage of Arunachala began to spread out, radiating throughout India and then over the world, finding an ardent response wherever they met a sensitive heart. The number of visitors to the Ashram at the foot of Arunachala steadily increased, drawn from many lands.

In 1882, in Cambridge, Max Mueller said : "If you ask me under what sky the human mind has brought out some of its most glorious qualities, thought deepest on some of life's most important problems and found answers deserving attention on the part of those who know their Plato and Kant by heart — I would

point to India. And were I to ask myself where to seek a corrective for the mental substance of Europe fed exclusively on the products of Greece and Rome and of the little Jewish nation, a corrective that would make our world more humane, more perfectly in tune with our real needs, more free from material pursuits and centred in the eternal again, I would point to India."

These words are more topical to-day than ever. We are living in a world governed by an intellect in pursuit of mental and material values which has already brought down on us two world wars and threatens another, the last one, for there will be no one to wage a fourth.

If our civilization and culture are to survive we must realize fully in thought and action the Maharshi's words : "Whatever one gives to others is in truth given to oneself ; once this is understood how can one refuse anything to another ?"

A Tribute

from

The Dalai Lama

The heritage of India is enriched with numberless saints and yogis. Ramana Maharshi represents that tradition and his spiritual greatness is guiding millions of people. Such masters light the path and bring solace to suffering humanity.



Swarg Ashram
Upper Dharmasala
Kangra/Punjab

November 5, 1965.

THE DALAI LAMA

A VISIT FROM GERMANY

Adapted from the German of GERTRUD LIETZ

With light luggage and our two bedding rolls, Anand and I left Bangalore on February 8th. Next morning we arrived at Tiruvannamalai station after one change at Katpadi junction. There we hired a 'jetka', a small horse-cart that took us in about twenty minutes the two and a half miles to the Ashram. We were expected, so some one was waiting for us. Passing through the arched entrance over which 'Sri Ramanasramam' is written in Latin letters, I had the strange feeling of having come home. I had difficulty in restraining my tears, so inexpressible was the feeling of well being.

The entire Ashram with its park-like compound is pervaded by an atmosphere of peace and devotion. It is run by a collateral descendent of the Maharshi, who left the body in 1950. His spiritual heritage is preserved and spread by his Indian and foreign devotees. Visitors come from all over the world to this holy place where mankind's perennial questions, what is the purpose of life and how it is to be realized are answered by the silent guidance and verbal instructions of an Enlightened One of our times.

Ramana Maharshi, the great Rishi of our modern age, taught that in all men Absolute Being is already real. "Every one is in fact the Self and is eternal, but in spite of this every one mistakes the body for his self. It is to dissipate this mistake that Enlightenment is necessary. Enlightenment illuminates both physical light and darkness. It is beyond both. It is neither one nor the other, yet one calls it light because it penetrates both. The nature of light is eternal. It is consciousness and consciousness is the Self and can therefore be perceived by everybody. Nobody is ever



separate from his self. Therefore the Self is in fact already realized. Only (and this is the greatest mystery) men are not aware of this but continue to strive for realization. Actually, realization only consists of freeing oneself from the wrong idea that one is not already realized. It is not anything new that can be gained. Otherwise it would not be eternal and would therefore not be worth seeking."

Again he said: "When the wrong idea 'I am this body' or 'I am not realized' drops away, the higher Consciousness or Self alone remains. Owing to their present state of relative consciousness men call this 'Realization', but the truth is that it exists eternally, here and now."

The mind springs from pure Consciousness. It is made up of thoughts. When free from ego, Being is universal Spirit, which is pure Consciousness. This is what is meant in the Bible by the name 'I am that I am'. But when captured by the ego it is too weak to withstand the affliction of thoughts. Happiness and unhappiness are only modes of thought.

Arthur Osborne, author of several books and editor of *The Mountain Path* has settled

with his wife near the Ashram and is spreading the Maharshi's teaching. Many other writers and visitors, both Indian and Western, are contributing to make the path to Self-realization more widely known. In German there is the work of Heinrich Zimmer, apart from various translations.

The path taught by Ramana Maharshi is Self-enquiry: the question 'Who am I?'. This is the path of knowledge, pure jnana marga. However, he always said that there are two paths: ask yourself 'Who am I?' or surrender completely. And surrender is bhakti marga.¹ These two paths seem to be mutually exclusive, because if one is striving to realize his identity with the universal Self through pure Knowledge it is not possible at the same time to worship a God or Guru. In fact, however, they are found not to be incompatible.

The Maharshi expected his followers to continue their active life in the world and discouraged those who wanted to renounce the world. "Change of environment is no use," he said. "It is the attitude of mind that must be changed, and if that is possible in the solitude of the forest, why not at home? So why change the environment?" Independent of outer forms, the path the Maharshi taught combines and harmonises the paths of knowledge (Jnana), love (bhakti) and unselfish action (karma).

In his lifetime and since his body's death, the Maharshi has helped innumerable seekers, both from India and the West, by the power of his invisible presence, enabling them to find peace and change their attitude of mind, while still performing their duties in life. Free from outer forms, the path he has laid down for us is entirely compatible with the conditions of our modern Western life.

The day we arrived was a Friday and therefore in the evening there was a beautiful Sri Chakra puja lasting three hours.² It was held

in the small Ashram temple built over the shrine of the Maharshi's mother. Despite the fact that no external rites are necessary for following the path of the Maharshi, a year before he left the body he had a Sri Chakra Meru, the supreme yantra, installed and himself instituted its ritual for those who benefit from this sort of more ritualistic path. Despite the great heat he sat for a full hour in the small shrine-room supervising the installation of the granite block with the Sri Chakra engraved on it and with his own hand adjusted the heavy plate of pure gold underneath it.

Attached to the temple is the new meditation hall with a sculpture of the Maharshi and a beautiful polished stone seat that was made for him. This has a more official character. In contrast to it is the Old Hall which is still vibrant with his presence. Here he sat through the years on a simple couch, conveying the message of the One Self more through silence than words. A full length, life-size portrait now rests on the couch where he used to recline.

A chair was placed for me near the Maharshi's shrine while the puja was going on. When it was finished sacred ashes were handed round on a brass tray with burning camphor in the middle of it. I was taken into the temple and felt the solemnity of the puja. Little flames were flickering in small oil lamps. The scent of the flowers offered in puja mingled with that of the incense sticks. The small, dark room was still vibrating from the chanting. At the threshold of the inner shrine I saw the Sri Chakra Meru garlanded with flowers, and in front of it the black polished lingam.

¹ For an explanation of the possibility of following the Maharshi by the way of devotion, read: 'The Maharshi and the Path of Devotion' by A. Devaraja Mudaliar in our issue of October 1964—*Editor*.

² For an explanation of this Sri Chakra and its Puja see the article 'A Chakra at Sri Ramanasramam' by Krishna Bhikshu in our issue of April 1965—*Editor*.

The Sri Chakra Yantra is a diagram of nine interpenetrating triangles of graded sizes : four of them are upright, symbolising the male principle and the human aspirant ; the other five, pointing downwards, symbolise the female principle and the descent of Grace. The whole yantra symbolises Siva-Shakti. The bindu, the minute circle in the centre, stands for the dynamic power in the heart of creation. This is the most perfect yantra of ancient India and is still used as a support for meditation to this day.

The wonderful peace of the Ashram protected by the holy hill, the cleanliness, the punctuality of the daily routine, the well prepared food served three times daily in the dining hall where all sit on the floor in long rows as in Bhagavan's lifetime and, Indian fashion, eat in silence, all this gives one the feeling of being in a house of God. The discreet friendliness of the Ashram residents adds to the impression of peace and hospitality and one can well understand those who wish to settle down there for life. When the Vedas are chanted in the new hall morning and evening one feels a breath of the ancient Vedic traditions from the time of the Rishis.

Just opposite the new hall is a small building where the Maharshi spent his last days of painful illness before giving up the body. All the objects he might have used are kept there as in his lifetime. It is looked after by one of his former attendants. The feeling of his presence there is overpowering.

Ramana Maharshi was one of the great figures of our times who brought lustre to the country and exercised a beneficent influence on all who came in touch with him. I had often the desire to meet him but had never the privilege of going to his Ashram in his lifetime. I was only destined to go there after he had passed away. I have many friends who knew him and from them I learned of his greatness, his goodness, his spiritual power and moral authority. May his memory live and may he continue to inspire and ennoble us.

— SRI PRAKASA,
former Governor of Madras and Maharashtra.

The Ashram peacocks that he loved, the small striped squirrels that used to come and take nuts from his hand, the dogs and other animals, all contribute to the peaceful atmosphere, so different from our world with its rush and change, its constant crises and its struggles, outer and inner.

The sun had not yet risen when we left the Ashram guest-house and took leave. The summit of the hill was still hidden in a crown of grey morning mist. In the small horse cart that had come for us we rattled along the still almost empty streets past the huge temple in town that we had visited the previous evening. It is an enormous temple with a large stone tank for ablutions, a thousand-pillar hall and eight large towers or gopurams in the usual South Indian style.

It was here that the Maharshi went first when he left home at the age of seventeen, having already spontaneously attained realization. The experience never left him, as it does most to whom it is vouchsafed. As he himself said : "Absorption in the Self continued uninterruptedly from that time on."

I kept my gaze on the still visible temple towers as long as possible. Freed from the morning mist, the peak of Arunachala glowed in the sunlight. Low down on the side of the hill I saw a treed oasis among a cluster of rocks, a cave by which a spring issues forth, Skandashram where the Maharshi lived absorbed in Bliss, mostly in silence, before he came down to the foot of the hill where the present Ashram was built.

A GERMAN TRANSLATION

By LUCY CORNELSSEN

It was about fifteen years ago that some one first showed me a photograph of Sri Ramana Maharshi. I was deeply impressed by its spiritual radiance. Soon afterwards some one introduced me to the book 'Der Weg zum Selbst' (The Way to the Self) by Heinrich Zimmer expounding the Maharshi's teaching. A sudden impulse came to me to learn Tamil so as to read his writings in the original. The idea seemed fantastic and I put it from me, but some years later, when I was working in a university library, the opportunity came to me and I did in fact start learning Tamil. After a year's work I wrote to the Ashram for the books to see whether I could translate them.

It was a beautiful autumn day when the books arrived. At dusk I put some flowers in front of Bhagavan's photograph, which had its permanent place on my writing desk, arranged the books around it, lit some Indian incense sticks and sat down for meditation. I felt elated and deeply moved, but instead of this turning into ecstasy, as sometimes happens, it turned instead into a deep, cool silence unruffled by thought. I knew Bhagavan's teaching but this was my first experience of the pure Consciousness he speaks of. It was only later that I realized that I had been blessed with the very presence of Bhagavan.

Strange coincidences brought me to Arunachala where I was able to take the help of Tamil devotees in completing my translation.



The Maharshi himself was no longer in the body. It was towards Christmas that I finished my task, which I now felt to have been an order from him. However, knowing something of the German book market, I appreciated that it would be no easy task to find a publisher for it. So sitting in front of the life-size picture of Bhagavan in the old meditation hall I told him that I had finished my task and there was nothing more I could do about it. Having found me to do the writing it was up to him now to find some one to do the publishing.

On Christmas Eve the Ashram received a letter from a German publisher asking for authorisation to bring out a book in German on the life and teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi. On looking at the date I found that it was written the very day that I put my problem before Bhagavan. So this is one more example of how the wisdom and guidance of Bhagavan is at work in the world.

All prayers are granted. No thought will ever go in vain. Every thought will produce its effect some time or other. Thought force will never go in vain.

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.

A Tribute from France

MEDITATION AND ACTION

By HENRI HARTUNG

Just as the members of a family or citizens of a nation draw together in face of a threat or misfortune, so should those who, in our times, are still guided by spiritual motives draw together to face the ever growing materialistic tendencies of the majority of their contemporaries. This need, however, cannot be met by societies or institutions or any formal or official action. What is needed is for those who remain true to the basic reality to seek first their own achievement and then make contact with others who are trying to follow the same path.

To safeguard one's own achievement is, in the beautiful words of Julius Evola, to maintain "an inward direction of Being"; it is to manifest, both in one's quest and one's activity, that transcendent Reality which exists in each one of us and remains "beyond life in the very heart of life".¹ This alone permits of the construction of a being open to higher influences; its negation leaves one cut off from his source and a prey to the uncertainty of his mind and the turmoil of his feelings.

What is needed, therefore, is to recognize other seekers of this transcendent Truth and forge links with them more powerful than those between members of any secular group, however rich or powerful it may appear. It is thus that we have to understand certain 'messages' that appear today amid the general degradation, not necessarily from a traditional organization but even more often from some person who has succeeded in maintaining his transcendent state by living in accordance with



his true Being. The recognition of such a message is like a significant look exchanged between two persons who share the same inner peace beyond social institutions and perhaps even religious creeds.

I recall such an occasion. A feeling of being suddenly outside time. A strange landscape of reddish earth with patches of vivid green rice fields, the plain dotted with hummocks and dominated by a serene mountain towering upwards in a single block. On the dusty road bullock-carts slowly lumber along as though to some distant or unknown goal. Outlined on the horizon at the foot of the mountain are the imposing towers of a vast Hindu temple. I am in Tiruvannamalai at the foot of the sacred mountain of Arunachala, a fragment of the traditional India, hallowed once more today by the presence of the great Sage, Sri Ramana, who by his motionless silence and his mere look penetrates all beings and draws them to him.

That was some fifteen years ago. A young Westerner who had just come through the

¹ 'Chevaucher le Tigre' by Julius Evola.

turmoil of war, I was seeking just such a message of meditation and serenity. Amid the violence and hatred of war and the pettiness and small jealousies of peace I was seeking wisdom incarnate. That was what drew me to India. In Bombay in 1947 I met a Hindu disciple of the Sage. A long railway journey across India, a rickety horse-cart from the station, and at last I found myself in his presence.

The questions I had laboriously prepared no longer seemed important. There was no need for speech, much less discussion : simply to breathe, to live, to be.

In the presence of the Sage it is as though an inner mechanism has been set going which brings about a subtle transformation, as though a spiritual emanation overwhelms you. Day after day I formulate some question, only to find by evening that it has been answered unspoken. I understand as never before that Truth is no accumulation of knowledge but an inner Reality not to be thought but lived.

Will the simplicity of this statement appear suspect to a rational Westerner? First of all let us not forget that it is a rational Westerner who is writing. Furthermore, let us not forget that the only criterion is the reality of our happiness. If the mere presence of the Maharshi is thus illuminating, if it speaks in silence, the task of writing about his message still remains and will necessarily be badly done, for how can one express the Inexpressible?

It is in the nature of man to seek an inner serenity sheltered from the turmoil of life. Why then seek happiness outside oneself? At the very moment when a man seeks happiness he seems to get farther away from it. For most of the time he does not know who he is even while seeking such advantages as he thinks will make him happy. In seeking fictitious good he gets ever farther from what he likes and draws nearer to what he dislikes; he binds himself hand and foot to the endless, infernal round of supply and demand; he

chases everlastingly new 'necessities' while neglecting the one thing needful.

"I shall achieve this, I am against that, I am for the other, I want so and so——" But who is this 'I'?

This is the fundamental question, the key question, that the Maharshi puts. This is his message.

Who am I? In order to realize lasting happiness it is essential to know oneself. The function of certain sages is to remind men of this, to call them back from their efforts to master the world to an effort to master themselves.

Sri Ramana teaches that by a process of reabsorption of the outer into the very centre of being the spiritual man perceives that he is neither a physical body nor an organ of perception (the five senses) or of action (hands, feet, etc) or of vital forces (breathing, digestion) or even mental forces subject to the ebb and flow of an unstable physical being. There remains only that pure Consciousness which is the Self residing in the heart and the sole source not only of the world and its phenomena but also of the mental and physical forces. I am That. What one must do is to detach oneself from the world and realize the Self.

By constantly dwelling on the question 'Who am I?' the seeker becomes aware that he cannot be the body or any part of it or even thought, reason, memory, feelings, psyche, in other words that he is something other than a constantly changing creation of the egoistic and limited 'me'.

Every one builds his own prison out of his doubts and anxieties by projecting his own idea of the world and his relationship to it. To kill this ego and become absorbed in the Self is the supreme Truth, the supreme Bliss.

But in order to do this do we have to abandon everything and renounce our world, relying only on contact with a guide? It is indeed of such a contact that I am speaking, but ultimately the real contact is with oneself.

This point is particularly interesting to the Westerner who lives in a world in which action plays a large part. It should therefore be emphasised here that spiritual life does not necessarily require renunciation of the world. On the contrary, involvement in life can be both the support and the consequence of an essential plenitude. Carry on with your occupations and do not renounce your responsibilities, said Sri Ramana.

It is not a matter of acting before or even after establishing certain principles but of pursuing the spiritual quest and worldly activity simultaneously. Meditation awakens a spiritual current in you which pervades your work. What leads to incarnate wisdom in a man is indeed this achievement of an inter-related inner reality and outer activity between spiritual and worldly life, the former illuminating the latter, the latter supporting the former. By his immobility and silence a true man thus showed me that I can work and speak providing I remain true, providing the work is not mere agitation nor the words a vain monologue. I felt not only a subtle peace but a force which drove me not to reject my Western, 20th Century way of life. How far this is from the egoism which some people impute to men of meditation who are in fact striving for the elimination of their ego!

There is no antagonism between meditating or praying on the one hand and facing the hard and unrewarding tasks of daily life on the other. In fact one cannot go without the other. They unite in building up oneself from moment to moment. Action then takes on a strange resonance as it leads to a strange humility. It ceases to be an end in itself and becomes natural through the very transcendence of its finality.

While the hands do their work the head soars to infinite solitude; and it is on account of this very enlightenment that the action becomes true, not because we wished it so out of personal vanity. Everything has to be accomplished. Each in his own way has to

achieve the work demanded by his qualities of character and the circumstances in which he is placed: but without attachment to its fruits.

'Who am I?' To know oneself, to know within oneself that transcendent serenity, is to act definitely according to that in oneself which is more than oneself. Spiritualization of one's conduct is not on some abstract plane. It presupposes a clear awareness of the difficulties which worldly life with its daily requirements entails.

Thinking of the Maharshi and his teaching I remember his eyes. Are they so piercing because of the Truth he embodies or on account of a great out-pouring? Both together: transcendent and loving at the same time, as in fact he was towards all who came to him, whether dignitaries or beggars, merchants or thieves, Westerners or Indians, Christians or Muslims, believers or unbelievers. There was compassion for all beings, for in all exists, though often hidden, that Divine Self which is the luminous source that has to be freed from the thorns of envy, laziness and pride.

I have spoken of my meeting with him as an event, but who can deny that an inner meeting is possible today also, beyond the dullness of earthly understanding. To ask oneself, 'Who am I? Who is it that is bound?' is the true way to Self-knowledge, to Liberation.

But what grace that some one in our times should bring such a message! He is an incarnation of what is incorruptible in Hindu teaching, a revelation of transcendent Truth, of a lived Reality. He is also a justification of that outer activity which is so burdensome when an outcome of our ambitions yet so lucid when turned towards our quest for Truth. By his very existence he validated the quest of all those who aim at something more than worldly success, whether in the silence of a monastery or the bustle of human activity.

(By courtesy, 'Syntheses')

A Devotee from America

HOW MAHARSHI CAME TO ME

By ROBERT HANLON

I first became aware of the Name and Grace of Bhagavan in December 1958. Since my father's death in 1956, I had been in a grave spiritual and psychological crisis. Playwrighting efforts of many years stopped abruptly. I then worked as an advertising copywriter until the unconscious weight of the identity search made any job impossible. I started taking a variety of drugs rather heavily, and began an intensive reading of Freudian and mystical literature, with the emphasis on Zen and Yoga. As if miraculously, financial help from a new wealthy friend began at this time and made the total search for Self economically feasible.

Gradually, I started to meditate in the Zen tradition, not knowing that already the Real Presence of the Divine Lover was dictating my most stumbling efforts. I was using the koan, "What was my original face before my father and mother were born?" I would meditate for a half hour, read a page here of one book, two pages of another, until the need to meditate overpowered me once more. But I was conscious of no inward change that would relieve my cosmic anxiety. I was overwhelmed by doubts that I could ever break through to the certitudes of immortality and the spirit.

Then, in December 1958, I went to Taos, New Mexico, to visit a friend who was also engaged in the search for Self. One day we went to see a rather advanced Yogi and painter, Herman Rednick, who lived in the beautiful sagebrush desert along the Rio Grande Canyon. In his cabin he had five or six framed pictures



of Indian sages. One of these pictures was the most famous one of Bhagavan, reproduced on the cover of Arthur Osborne's biography (as above). Looking at it, I felt as if I had been waiting to see it for 10,000 years. The absolute serenity, sweetness and love in His eyes overwhelmed me; for the first time I knew there was really something to be discovered, and that here was my guide to the promised land. Tears came unbidden to my eyes. I was also conscious of powerful vibrations in the cabin which filled me with exultation. (I am now aware that these vibrations were the initial transmission of the Spirit, and that Herman was the Guru transmitting the Grace of Bhagavan, Sad-Guru, the One without a second).

Returning to New York, I obtained Bhagavan's books and started to meditate according to His teachings. I also began praying to Him, using the mantra "OM Ramana", as given in Mudaliar's "Day by Day with Bhagavan". I stopped taking drugs completely,

thanks to the ever-pouring Grace of the Divine Saviour.

Several times during the succeeding months, the idea came to me to lie down on my bed and see if I could return to the womb in a psychic sense, "to go back the way you came in", as Bhagavan told one devotee. These attempts had no results until the 22nd of December, 1959. This time, at noon, I was immediately conscious that something extraordinary had happened, that in some inexplicable way I had returned to the womb, although I was still completely conscious of my surroundings and adult identity. Then the question came, "Where did I come from before I was in the womb?"

No sooner was this question out than a white light opened above and between the eyes; in it I saw what seemed to be black objects moving about. The word "spermatazoa" flashed through my mind, with no conscious volition on my part (I was not familiar with St. Augustine's statement of the Logos Spermatikos until several years later). This word, in its turn, triggered a complete rigidity of the body, so that I was aware of being completely in the grip of a higher power. A golden light appeared at the loins and three spiralling lines of light came up the body. The great golden light stopped momentarily at the navel, then rose to the forehead, where it took on the shape of a cone. My whole consciousness went through the horn — and I was immersed in the Ocean of Bliss. Immediately I said, "Of course! I remember. This is my original face." After a very short

time, the consciousness came back into the body, which was now all white. The golden horn lingered for a few seconds, then came down again into the navel and so back to the loins. I now understood the significance of the myth of Unicorn.

Still, (such is the obstinacy of the ever-clinging ego) despite this overpoweringly blissful rebirth of the Spirit, which transformed faith into knowledge, I had no certitude that the Spirit which had led me to this beatitude of Light was truly Bhagavan. Thus was I questioning several nights later ("How do I know it is Bhagavan who has rescued me from my ignorance and not simply any 'familiar' spirit"?) — when once again my body was gripped by a superior force. Slowly my head was turned in the chair to the left, where the picture of Bhagavan which had first enthralled me in New Mexico was hanging. My gaze was held rigidly on the picture for some time while the thought came to my mind from an inner voice, "Now do you see? Now, at last, do you see?"

Now at last I saw. The power of the Holy Name of Bhagavan Sri Ramana, the beatitude and salvation in His holy gaze, have been my surety and bliss since that day. To me, now, all life is a countless succession of Bhagavan's favours; many extraordinary things have happened daily. Pain and suffering have not disappeared from my life, but I accept them now as the will of Bhagavan, to whom I have surrendered as best I can. I am conscious at all times of the Real Presence of my Saviour. May I one day be worthy of the overpowering Love which He has showered upon me.

All religions postulate the three fundamentals, the world, the soul and God; but it is the One Reality that manifests itself as these three. One can say: 'The three are really three' only so long as the ego lasts. Therefore to inhere in one's own Being, when the ego is dead is the perfect state.

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.

An Interpretation from Holland

A DREAM WORLD

By MME. JOICE HIDDINGHE

The Maharshi likes to compare life to a dream. Well, the Creator of the dream is God, the pictures which form the dream are the world, and the identification of the Divine consciousness with the pictures is the ego.

If the creation is considered as having an independent existence in itself, it is *unreal*; but if considered as dependent on the Divine, then it is *real*.

What is the exact meaning of the word, "dream", as the Maharshi conceives it? This term shocks many Westerners, and yet it is not far from the teaching of nuclear science that matter is an illusion. The atom has been reduced to an electron; and then it was discovered that this electron, which enters into the constitution of the whole of our solid world, has itself no material form; it is nothing but energy.

How is it, then, that we see the world as it appears to us with all its shapes and colours, trees and mountains? All this, answers the Advaitin, is nothing but the scaffolding built by the mind. It cannot be other than our individual consciousness which thus transforms the constantly-moving electricity into a universe having the appearance of a stable world.

Let us take the first verse from *Ulladu Narpadu*, 'Forty Verses', the Maharshi's philosophic poem :



"Because of the perception of ourselves and of the world, all must needs admit a single Principle with power to appear as many. The pictures and the seer — both of name and form, the scene and the light, all these are HE."

Here it is really the question of the one Consciousness, which is God, the pure Being. But, this Consciousness is also the individual seer as well as the world. This one Consciousness which gives to energy its many apparent forms, and which divides itself into infinite, individual separate consciousnesses, seems to be the only reasonable explanation of an external world free from matter.

In fact, nowadays, scientists also do not hesitate to consider energy one in spite of the innumerable forms it takes.

Then is not the Consciousness which interprets these forms also One, in spite of its innumerable apparently individual forms?

Mme. Joice Hiddinghe, is a Dutch seeker who came to India in the year 1940 and stayed at Sri Ramanasramam for some time. The following article is a summary of her contribution to the book, *Etudes sur Ramana Maharshi*, published in France by Messrs. Herbert & Reymond.

It is difficult to conceive the relation between this transcendental Consciousness which is God, the Creator of the dream of life, and the individual consciousness of man, because, the latter perceives the pictures of this dream without suspecting that they are all merely an illusion and that itself and the Creator of the dream are really one and identical.

When we dream in the night, we see numerous forms, all different from one another. Nevertheless, we identify ourselves with one of these apparent forms; and in the dream, we believe it to be ourselves.

We are the creators not only of the entire dream but also of every one of the numerous apparent forms we see therein, including the particular form or person with whom we identify ourselves.

Yet the dream-person considers all the illusory forms real and different from one another. He thinks himself to be separate from them, and does not in the least suspect that himself, the forms of the dream and the creator of the dream, are one and the same.

This he knows only when he wakes up, that is, when he knows that the dream itself is an illusion. To him awake, his own dream-person, the persons in the dream and the dream itself are alike unreal.

Similarly, for the pure Consciousness, whence rises the dream of life, this dream itself has never existed.

All the search a seeker has to make, all the concentration the Master recommends for the discovery of the Self, have the one object of removing the ego-sense. It is by dint of deepening the truth of our being that we discover that this individuality, this sense of separateness on which is built our inner and outer life, does not actually exist.

At that moment, we enter into the transcendental Truth and the illusion that makes us see the world as an aggregate of separate beings and forms vanishes. What we were

taking as solid realities become a mirage, a cinematographic projection, and our own individuality appears as merely one of the forms on the screen created by ourselves.

The Union of the two consciousnesses, the Absolute (which is Truth) and the limited (which is ignorance), will automatically establish itself by the disappearance, which is at bottom an absorption, an assimilation, of the I-ness in the pure Being of the Self.

In the Sage who has attained Self-realization, we continue to perceive manifestations of the mind as well as of physical life, because we ourselves are still subject to the world-illusion. For the Sage himself the identification with the mind and the body—an identification from which springs ego-sense (*ahamkara*) with all its train of imperfections—has entirely disappeared.

This identification, from which the Sage has become eternally free, is what Christianity means by original sin. This explanation reconciles Maharshi's teaching with the words of St. Paul: "It is no more I that live, but Jesus Christ in me who liveth."

For St. Paul, Jesus Christ is God. He is therefore the Universal "I". In other words, the Maharshi's method seeks to remove the "old man" of St. Paul, so that the Universal Self may take his place.

In making comparisons like these, I evidently lower the level of the Sage's ideas; because, in doing so, I try to explain these ideas in the way they present themselves to us. For the Maharshi who is Awakened, who has attained Realization, his body and mind no longer exist; his activities may be compared to those of a somnambulist. This again is a comparison, one however the Maharshi himself has used.

The State of Realization in which the Maharshi lives, that is to say, the re-established Union between his two consciousnesses, is according to him the sole object of our life;

and it is accompanied by the greatest Bliss that man can experience, the Bliss Everlasting.

Though the Master does not often speak of this immense Felicity of this inexpressible Beatitude, yet he begins his small pamphlet, *Who am I?* with the remarkable observation :

"Every living being longs always to be happy, untainted by sorrow ; and every-one has the greatest love for oneself, which is solely due to the fact that happiness is one's real nature."

It should however be noted that this Realization of one's inherent Bliss cannot be gained except by the dedication of one's entire being.

Having observed the Maharshi in the light of his own teachings, one has the natural and irresistible desire to inquire what can be that Supreme State of Realization in which he lives, a State which it is impossible to describe or explain in so many words. Since, however, what is of primary importance is less the Master's doctrine (if he has any) than his Realization, we become, as it were, the objects of our own pity when we find that what cannot be communicated to us through speech can also not be comprehended by us except when we have attained it, and then, perhaps, only to find for ourselves that it is wholly incommunicable through speech.

But, in talking to the great Sage, one gets the unmistakable impression that one is talking to a person in whom is opened a sense which is still asleep in us. The Maharshi's words are felt to be of such vital importance to us as would be the description by one living in the world of light to a people, who always lived in a dark cave. They make us seek what we have been groping for all our life !

In the world where the Master lives, the sense of values is different and his relations with animate and inanimate objects cannot be the same as ours ; because he brings everything

back to Oneness, whereas we believe that we are real and separate individuals. His attitude towards the world may, therefore, be compared to that which enlightened Christianity attributes to Divinity. "Everything happens by God's Will," say the Christians. Everything happens by the Will of the Maharshi's Self.

Why then should he interfere in anything at all ? Is he not himself one with the Mover and the Ultimate Cause of all acts and events that unfold themselves around him ? Therefore, can there exist for him a separation — the cause of all anxiety and displeasure — a difference other than superficial between different beings ? Can he feel the desire to become useful or worry about anything when he knows that none here below is either useful or useless, and that everything is being done according to a transcendental plan and without our help ?

Western thought also does not picture God as a Being who has to struggle in order to gain His object, who must "seek" to help human beings, who likes this one and dislikes the other. God is the helper of all ; He is the eternal, omnipresent Helper. He has not to help us in the manner we seem to help one another in this ephemeral life of ours. As the Maharshi says, "Does the idea of helping people in a dream occur to one, who has awakened from it ? Does not this ideal of helping "others" imply the idea of separation and multiplicity ? A realized Sage helps man, but without the idea of "helping".

So then, the Maharshi lives in perfect serenity. Notwithstanding this serenity, we find in him the most perfect, the most elevated and the most universal charity. Monkeys and outcasts are as much his friends as Yogis and Brahmins ; and when once thieves forced his door and racked him with blows, he spoke compassionately about them.

All those who go to see him are received with the same smile, the same kindness, the same tolerance and the same understanding,

for in all of them, he sees and loves his own Self.

But here also, we must use very human language to be completely true to the thought of the great Master. Since the dream of life has ceased to exist for him, the foregoing reasoning cannot even touch him. Yet he also, when he speaks to the world at large, speaks the language of the world even if it does not strictly tally with the transcendental Truth. It is not possible for him to do otherwise.

It is the same when we think of God, because we know well that we cannot attribute to Him a personality like ours. His sight does not depend upon eyes, nor His hearing upon ears, nor His thinking upon a brain, nor His succession of ideas and impressions upon time and space. Neither can His Love be compared with our feeling of love.

Though this collection of ideas and impressions which make our perceptions of the universe cannot appear as such in God, yet He, in a mysterious manner that escapes us, is the Cause of all and the Life of all. Everything that exists, everything that happens, must be present in His Spirit. How? We do not know. So it is with the Maharshi.

How then shall we understand this great Sage who has realized his identity with the one, eternal Truth, the Absolute beyond all duality, the Self Universal, but who neverthe-

less moves and speaks with an apparent personality of his own?

Indian philosophers have solved this difficulty by calling God Brahman when considered in His Absolute Aspect, and Ishvara when considered in His relation to the world. Brahman as pure Being is necessarily beyond all human conception and is therefore indefinable. But, how does the Indian philosopher define Ishvara? Ishvara, God or Creator, according to the Yoga Vasishtha, is the first identification of the divine Consciousness with an idea which itself is divine.

We can in the same way speak of the two aspects of Maharshi's life. That by which we attribute a personality to the Sage is itself a divine idea: That in which the Sage abides as identical with the impersonal Absolute is the one, eternal Truth of our own being, the Self Universal.

One day when we were discussing these questions a young Englishman asked: "Bhagavan, why should we undertake a long journey to come to you?"

The Master explained that, after having seen him, people go back with the certainty that Realization exists, that it is possible to attain it, and that, thenceforward, they know the way that leads to it.

Certainly, no exposition, no testimony can have the value of personal contact with this venerable Sage of Peace, of Truth and of Love.

I have never had the privilege of meeting Sri Ramana Maharshi. My two efforts to go and see him did not succeed. But I have met several persons who had his darshan and had contact with him. Ordinary men try to influence people by their words; some others do it by action; but to very few is given the gift to transform men and women by the power of their silent personality. Mouna is not merely remaining silent; real mouna is peace that becomes a creative power, i.e. *parashanti*. In that sense Sri Ramana Maharshi was a Mouni of the highest order.

— K. M. MUNSHI,
President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.



BHAGAVAN RAMANA MAHARSHI AS SEEN BY A BENGALI

By JAGANNATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

In the intellectual and spiritual regeneration of modern India the contribution of Bengal has been conspicuous. The galaxy of luminaries who have shed lustre on her in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries include Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, Rishi Bankim Chandra, Sri J. C. Bose, Sri Aurobindo and Rabindranath Tagore. The Bengalis are by nature an emotional people and this shows also in their approach to religion. So when I became acquainted with the life and teaching of Bhagavan Sri Ramana what impressed me from the start was the simplicity and directness of the method he prescribed and its freedom from emotional elements.

It seems to me that Sri Bhagavan is simply reiterating the grand, eternal truths of the Vedas and the Upanishads about the non-duality of God and man. The joyous certitude that characterised their teachings was discernible in him too. They used to say: "All you people of the world, you are indeed immortal." And Bhagavan too impressed on us that we can become immortal by eliminating the illusory self or ego. "You have only to give up your long-standing habit of identifying yourself with the non-self. All effort is only for that. By turning the mind outwards you have been seeing the world, the non-self; by turning it inwards you will see the Self."¹

Indeed, Bhagavan's method is so simple and direct that it makes an outer Guru seem unnecessary. Bhagavan did indeed say that the Guru need not necessarily take human



form or be sought for outside oneself. His Grace is always present to help those who sincerely make the effort to realize the Self. "The Guru is one who at all times abides in the profound depths of the Self. He never sees any difference between himself and others and is quite free from the idea that he is the Enlightened or Liberated One while those around him are in bondage or the darkness of ignorance."² Though without bodily form, Bhagavan is still the Guru to those who turn to him.

To a Bengali who has been accustomed to hear the Lord's Name chanted with fervour and devotion, accompanied by dancing and sankirtan, as introduced into Bengal by Lord Gouranga³ more than four hundred years ago, Bhagavan's method of enquiry in absolute stillness of the mind presents a sharp contrast.

And in the life of Bhagavan I am confronted with a towering personality the like of which I have never seen or heard of or come across in books.

¹ *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, vol. 11, p. 103.

² *The Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi in his own words*, p. 120.

³ Known also as Sri Chaitanya.

Another striking fact was that Bhagavan never ran down any religion or the traditions sponsored by a religion. For instance the Hindu caste system has become the target of criticism by preachers and reformers, but Bhagavan would never attack it outright. When asked whether we should ignore caste rules he said : "Not in the beginning. Observe them to start with. They serve as a check on the vagaries of the mind and it is thus purified."⁴ On the same subject he says farther on : "Differences always exist, not only in human beings but also in plants, animals, etc. This state of affairs cannot be helped. . . . You need not notice these distinctions. There is diversity in the world but a unity runs through the diversity. The Self is the same in all. There is no difference in spirit. The differences are external and superficial. Find the unity and you will be happy."

I myself am a disciple of Sri Sitaramdas

Omkarnath Maharaj (about whom there is an article in *The Mountain Path* of July 1965) and he is a strict follower of our Sanatana Dharma, the Eternal Dharma based on the Vedas and Upanishads, to which foreigners have given the name of 'Hinduism'. He is also an upholder of our Varnashrama Dharma or caste dharma. I therefore very much appreciate the Maharshi's respect for every religion. Once, for instance, he told a Muslim devotee to try to understand and follow what the word 'Islam' means : that is the total surrender of the ego.

Bhagavan's courageous message, reminding us of our heritage of the Rishis of old, gives us faith and courage despite the gloom of present day materialism, to seek liberation from bondage to the non-self, the fake ego, which causes the sorrows and frustrations of life.

⁴ From *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*.

SILENT RESPONSE

By K. K. NAMBIAR

People who visited Sri Bhagavan during his life-time, could not have failed to observe the characteristic pose in which he reclined on his sofa with eyes closed and his head supported with his left arm — particularly at the time of Veda-parayan and so on. Some of us, devotees, sitting around used to watch him intently during such periods. On several occasions, I used to mentally pray to him that on reopening his eyes, he should bestow a look at me and I must say I was never disappointed. So, it was crystal clear

to me that prayers to Bhagavan need not be vocal and he felt, knew, and answered the inner prayers of all his devotees.

Conversely, there were also occasions when I sat at the feet of Sri Bhagavan and intently meditated on his form with closed eyes, and most often when I opened my eyes, Sri Bhagavan appeared to be watching me. It is a great comfort even now to recall the experience of those exquisite moments which stand out so vividly in my memory. Time hasn't effaced even a fraction of those vistas.

REMINISCENCE OF A PATRIOT

By BHARATANANDA

Reminiscence of a visit to Bhagavan by Rajendra Prasad, who was later to become President of India, with the industrialist Jamnalal Bajaj and others, in 1938.



J. B. : How is Sadbuddhi to be steadily kept up ?

Bh. : All living beings are aware of their surroundings and therefore intellect must be surmised in all of them. At the same time, there is a difference between the intellect of man and that of other animals, because man not only sees the world as it is and acts accordingly but also seeks fulfilment of desires and is not satisfied with the state of affairs. In his attempt to fulfil his desires, he extends his vision far and wide ; and yet he turns away dissatisfied. He then begins to think and reason out.

The desire for permanency of happiness and of peace bespeaks such permanency of his own nature. Therefore, he seeks to find and regain his own nature, i.e. his Self. That found, all is found.

Such inward seeking is the path to be gained by man's intellect. The intellect itself realises after continuous practice that it is enabled by some Higher Power to function. It cannot itself reach that Power. So it ceases to function after a certain stage. When it thus ceases to function, the Supreme Power is still left there all alone. That is Realization ; that is the finality ; and that is the goal.

It is thus plain that the purpose of the intellect is to realise its own dependence on the Higher Power and its inability to reach

the same. So it must annihilate itself before the goal is gained.

J. B. (quoting) : "I do not desire kingdoms etc. Only let me serve Thee for ever ; there is my highest pleasure." Is that right ?

Bh. : Yes. There is room for Kama (desire) so long as there is an object apart from the subject (i.e. as long as there is duality). There can be no desire if there is no object. The state of no-desire is moksha. There is no duality in sleep, and so also no desire. Whereas, there is duality in the waking state and so desire also is there. Because of duality, a desire arises for the acquisition of the object. That is the out-going mind (bahirmukha vritti), which is the basis of duality and of desire. If one knows that the Bliss is none other than the Self, the mind becomes inward turned. If the Self is gained, all the desires are fulfilled. That is said to be 'avaptakama' in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. That is moksha.

Jamnalal Bajaj, trying to make himself clear by saying that what is meant by sadbuddhi is not the same as buddhi but means that which holds fast to the good, the right and

the chosen path, wanted to know how such steadfastness could be gained.

Bh. : What is wanted for gaining the highest goal is the loss of individuality. The intellect is co-extensive with individuality. The loss of individuality can only come after the disappearance of buddhi, sat or asat. The question therefore does not arise.

J.B. : But yet one must know the right thing, choose the right path, practise the right dharma and hold fast to it. Otherwise one is lost.

Bh. : True, strength accrues by holding to the right direction, without swerving from it.

J.B. : Difficulties are met with. How is one to get the necessary strength to overcome the obstacles which beset one's path?

Bh. : By bhakti and satsang.

J.B. : Loss of individuality has just been mentioned as a prerequisite for moksha. Now devotion and association with the wise are advised as the methods. Is individuality not implied in them : e.g. 'I am a bhakta', 'I am a satsangi'?

Bh. : The method is pointed out to the seeker. The seeker has certainly not lost his individuality so far. Otherwise the question would not have arisen. The way is shown to effect the loss of individuality of the seeker. It is thus appropriate.

J.B. : Is the desire for political independence right?

Bh. : Such desire begins with self-interest. Prolonged practical work for the goal gradually widens the outlook so that the individual becomes merged in the country. Such merging of the individual is desirable and the karma is nishkama.

J.B. : If independence is gained after a long struggle and terrible sacrifice, isn't the

person justified in being pleased with the result and elated by it?

Bh. : He must in the course of his work, have surrendered himself to the Higher Power, whose might must be kept in mind and never lost sight of. How then can he be elated? He should not even care for the results of his actions. Then only it becomes nishkama.

J.B. : How can unerring rectitude be ensured for the worker?

Bh. : If he has surrendered himself to God or Guru, the Power to which he has surrendered will guide him in the right way. The worker need no longer concern himself about the rectitude or otherwise of his course. The doubt will arise only if he did not obey the master in all details.

J.B. : Is there not any Power on earth which can bestow Grace on Its devotees so that they may grow strong to work for the country and gain independence? (Sri Maharshi remains in silence).

J.B. : Is not the tapas of the ancient mahatmas of the land available for the benefit of its present day inheritors?

Bh. : It is. But it must be remembered that no one can claim to be the sole beneficiary. The benefits are shared by all alike. (After a pause) Is it without such Grace that the present awakening has come into being?

J.B. : (After a short pause) Sri Rajendra Prasad is such a noble and selfless worker for the country that he has sacrificed a very lucrative career for this work. The country needs him. And yet he is not in good health, and is always weak and ailing. Why should there be such cruelty to such a noble son of the country? (Sri Maharshi simply smiled benignantly).

The whole Vedanta is contained in the two Biblical statements 'I am that I am' and 'Be still and know that I am God'.
— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.

BHAGAVAN OR RAMANA ?

By WEI WU WEI

It should perhaps be difficult to say much that is new on the subject of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi from the point of view of his personal devotees, but there might be a passing interest in a few remarks from a point of view that is essentially independent.

Let me begin by explaining the attitude of the great Chinese Masters of the T'ang dynasty of China. When the pious Emperor sent for the 1st Patriarch, Bodhidharma, and asked him to expound the holy doctrine, Bodhidharma replied simply, "Majesty, there is no doctrine, and nothing holy about it." When a young monk arrived at his monastery, Hui-hai, known as 'The Great Pearl', asked him why he had come. He answered, "In the hope that you, Master, may be gracious enough to teach me." The reply of Hui-hai was, "I have nothing to teach anyone," and, on another occasion, "This poor monk has no teaching by which to liberate others." Not only can understanding not be transferred, but objective phenomena cannot even communicate directly, much as when you 'ring up' a friend on the telephone you can only communicate with him via the Central Exchange. But no analogy is ever exact, and here the 'Exchange' is separated in 'space' from the speakers whereas in our living-dream the Exchange, or Godhead, is always here and



now. We cannot teach one another anything directly, where understanding is concerned : we can only summon understanding from its source which is mutual and what we are.

Now I would like to say that whereas something like 90% of the recorded words of the great Chinese Masters summon the requisite understanding — or some approximation of it — in my own case, something like 98% of the recorded words of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi seem to do that. The reason for this need not be looked for in the speakers — for what I am obliged, with apologies for the absurdity, to call 'Truth', is singular and not plural — but in the circumstances of the survival of their words. In the former case the 10% wastage may be attributed to misunderstanding of the words by the recorders, to errors of copyists over some twelve centuries, and to the absence of understanding on the part of modern translators.

Our readers need no introduction to Wei Wu Wei, who is one of the most brilliant writers on Zen today. He gives here his view of Bhagavan from a Zen background. His mention of the Zen Master who said he had nothing to teach reminds us of Bhagavan's saying that asking for guidance is like being at Sri Ramanasramam and asking the best way to get there.

In the case of Bhagavan, whose words were heard and recorded by our own contemporaries, and translated into modern European languages on the spot, the wastage from these causes is relatively negligible. Yet, superficially speaking, could this so-called 'Truth' be more diversely expressed? The former represented the Negative Way, the latter the Positive.

To divided phenomenal mind negative and positive are contraries, mutually exclusive, and positivity cannot be reached positively — since it lies behind the negative : to attempt it is like trying to pull oneself up by one's own shoe-laces. This may sound like a condemnation of Vedanta, but I am told by advanced Advaitins that whereas some followers stop at the first, positive stage, those who are really gifted go on to the second stage, which is purely negative. Really, however, and as far as this personal narrative is concerned, this just does not matter since noumenally there can be no difference and it is not necessary or useful to notice whether what Bhagavan said was the one or the other, since the afore-said 'Truth' lies in another direction of measurement to either.

From these remarks it may perhaps be clear why, whereas sectarian members of other religions tend to underrate, if not to condemn, the great teachers who do not belong to their own sect, non-sectarian pilgrims make no difference whatever between them, but judge them only, if at all, by their capacity for summoning revelation. From a slightly different point of view, did Bhagavan 'teach'? Did he lecture? Did not understanding come in silence in his presence, rather than in the noise of words? Does it not perhaps still come now when there are no words at all, save those recorded in print?

But there is another good reason why pilgrims who never knew Bhagavan, and who are not Vedantists, or even Advaitins — using that Sanskrit term non-sectarianally to include

all followers of non-duality in any or no religion — have as absolute a regard for him as even his own devotees may have. Who else is there to whom anyone can reasonably point, of our own days, who lived for half a century, available to all at all times, in a state of as perfect identification with Godhead as would seem possible to an apparent individual manifestation? Hundreds of us knew him personally as such, and of whom else can that be said? What a marvellous thing it is to have had such a contemporary — and to be able to compare his words and his living of life with the words, and descriptions left us by Scriptures, of past Sages? In Bhagavan alone can we test those words and those scriptures, and see for ourselves that they are not a dream or a phantasy.

I will close this commentary, these somewhat diffuse remarks by an independent pilgrim, by stating why the writer is not in his own eyes a devotee, even in an honorary capacity. It might be possible to find someone who had a more profound regard for Bhagavan, though that should be difficult indeed, but nevertheless the writer is no devotee. This is not because he does not recognise Bhagavan as a manifestation of Godhead, but because he sees that manifestation phenomenally as any other, and as what any other phenomenon appears to be but is not. Sri Ramana Maharshi as such was a phenomenal concept in mind like the rest of us, and phenomenal objects as such are not suitable objects of deification, however great their apparent qualities. We wish to worship him as a deity? He was Godhead? No doubt — but aren't we all? What else could we be? And was he that kind of deity who asks for worship? Is not that the very essence of bondage — and did he not spend his living-dream in seeking to free us? Did he even care to admit that he was a Guru? Did he not say that the Guru was within; and if we knew him as such would we want to worship him as a phenomenal object? Where is he?

Did he not ask — when he was dying, and his friends were lamenting — wherever did they think he could go to? Has that tremendous, yet so simple, statement been properly understood? If there could be a doctrine, and if he preached one, what could it be but what those words imply? What else could there possibly be to say — let alone to teach?

THE SHEET - ANCHOR

By DILIP KUMAR ROY *

I don't know how I can best testify to Bhagavan's greatness which made such an indelible impression on my mind. I feel his Grace so often coursing through my blood. How can I write about that at all convincingly? Yet I do want to attest my gratitude to one to whom (I so often feel) I owe even more than I know. I will, by way of explanation, tell you just of one crisis when he helped me in a way more convincing than even a startling sense-perception.

My faith then had tottered. I have known so many saints in my life and they have all helped me in different phases of my sadhana. But in this phase I wondered if one could be sure of any lasting prop. Then two figures suddenly flowed before my mind's eye. One was Sri Ramakrishna and the other was Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi. And I told myself: "Why do you doubt? Is there any contradiction in either of these?"

No, I told myself, vastly relieved. These two figures stand out as luminous as ever. "But then," I added to myself, "I have never seen Sri Ramakrishna. If I had perhaps I would have seen some contradiction in him too; who knows?"

"But what about Ramana Maharshi?" I answered my own doubt with joy and certitude. "Have I not seen him? And did I find any contradiction in him, then or afterwards?"

Strangely enough a visual memory of a godly personality helps in a way even the memory of the visual impression cannot

fathom. What I mean by this is a little difficult to put into words. But I do mean something. What? I can't quite express it. But one thing I can say which may be understandable; that is that in such abysmal inner pain I recalled again and again the Shiva-like peace on the Maharshi's marvellous face and the deep light of compassion that I saw irradiating his star-like eyes; and I could and did dismiss my doubts, though after a struggle.

"For I have seen something that is mightier than the most cankerous doubts," I told myself; "I have seen him, the Maharshi, and he has blest me." He even called me once, a friend of mine wrote from Sri Ramanasramam to tell me in 1948. But alas, I postponed and so lost the great opportunity.

I regretted not having responded to his call of compassion (what else could it be?) although I followed the path of emotional bhakti and so had once even misunderstood him. Later Sri Krishna Prem, the noted bhakta, had scolded me, saying: "What? Bhakti, you say? The Maharshi is one whose soul is overflowing with love. How could you call him a mere jnani, a man of knowledge?" And he added: "One who says he knows but does not love does not know, and one who says he loves but does not know does not love."

Yes, I understood. The Maharshi both knows and loves. That is why he is so pre-eminently great.

* For whom see our issue of Oct. 1964, pp. 234-5.

RAMANA SAT-GURU

By S. S. COHEN

Sri Ramana Jayanti has come again, bringing cheer to thousands of Bhagavan's devotees, old and new, far and near. On this day they call to mind all he has done for them, all he is to them and how he has influenced their lives. Old devotees who had the rare privilege of a long stay in his physical presence (and their number is diminishing year by year) feel that since leaving the body he has not ceased to work the wonderful transformation in them that he began in life. Newcomers also feel his powerful support in their sadhana.

When Bhagavan used to say that the Guru is not the body many failed to grasp his meaning; but as time passed and he continued to show them his Grace and support in their meditation the significance of these words gradually became clear, so that they eventually ceased to think of him as a person with a body to reminisce about. In this connection, the Bhagavata gives an apt illustration of the relation of disciple to Guru in the story of Sri Krishna and Uddhava.

When Sri Krishna ended his mission on earth and was prepared to return to Vaikunta, his eternal abode, Uddhava, who was greatly attached to his person, appealed to him with tears in his eyes to take him along with him, saying: "I have strong forebodings, O Supreme Yogi, that after destroying the Yadu race you will leave the earth altogether. . . . I cannot bear to be away from your feet even for a moment. Grant that I may be taken with you to your divine abode. . . . How can I now be separated from you?" (*Bhagavata*, XI. 6).

Krishna answered that it would be in Uddhava's own interest not to cling to



Krishna's body but to stay on after him and practise Yoga in the Himalayas "after shaking off all attachments to your family and kinsfolk, keeping your mind fixed wholly on me."

"You must always remember, friend Uddhava," he continued, "that whatever is thought by the mind, perceived by the eye and ear and spoken by the tongue is the creation of the mind and therefore illusory. . . . By controlling your mind and senses you will see the world in your own self and your self in Me, the Supreme Lord. Possessed of this knowledge and immersed in the contentment of Self-realization you will experience no obstruction in life." (*Ibid.*, XI. 7).

Sri Bhagavan knew, like Sri Krishna, that nothing is more productive of the highest spiritual results than concentration of the mind on one's real nature, which is the absolute Reality, the Lord Himself, the Supreme Guru. Attachment to and service of the outer Guru in the form of the Master takes only a secondary place. The following incident, which occurred in my presence, shows how Bhagavan graded meditation higher than service.

Once the devotee who was in charge of English correspondence in the Ashram office was unavailable and the Sarvadhikari asked Major Chadwick, who was then living in the Ashram, to take his place. Chadwick refused but felt a prick of conscience for doing so. After dinner that night, when we were alone or almost alone with Bhagavan (I do not exactly remember after these 27 or 28 years) Chadwick told him about it and asked whether he had done right. Bhagavan answered that Chadwick was doing him greater service by meditating, thereby greatly relieving the latter's mind.

Bhagavan was often asked about the necessity of a Guru for the attainment of Liberation and used to answer that the Guru was necessary. And indeed, mere study of the Upanishads is unlikely to lead very far, whereas association with a Sage and absorption of his instruction based on his own experience may quickly bring about the requisite comprehension leading towards Liberation. No doubt some Sages, like Bhagavan, have attained the Goal without a Guru in human form, but these were rare beings who had already in their past lives brought their sadhana so far that only a little further effort was needed.¹

There is no need to go into the detail about Bhagavan's teaching. It is simple orthodox Advaita Vedanta as taught in the Upanishads, the Gita, the Bhagavata and the writings of Shankara, Vidyaranya, Gaudapada and others. We find in it complete consistency in likening jagrat, the waking state, to svapna, the dream state. Both are changeable and impermanent, so that when one is on the other is off, whereas he who dreams and wakes is the same person, present in both. There is a traditional story that illustrates this.

Once a king dreamed that he was a young man of the name of Chandu owning a prosperous grocery. One day Panji, a beautiful outcaste girl, came half-drunk to buy betel nuts from him. She roused his passion by her

seductive demeanour (or misdemeanour) to such an extent that he decided to marry her, even though it would mean loss of caste for him. When she became his wife Panji turned out very vicious but Chandu overlooked all her faults owing to his infatuation for her. Her wants proved insatiable, ruining his business and driving him to take up work reserved for outcastes. This went on for twenty years, during which time he had three children by Panji, of whom the eldest, a boy, grew to be even more wicked than his mother. With his increased family Chandu had to take to dishonest means of livelihood to add to his income, and he suffered the consequences. He sank lower and lower till one day his son, in a fit of rage, hanged himself. The king's officers, suspecting Chandu of being the murderer, took him to prison and beat him mercilessly. He cried out so loud that (let us not forget that he was a king in his waking state) it woke his queen who was sleeping near by. She got up and shook him and woke him too, thereby ending the ordeal of the dream-Chandu. The king was so much shaken by his dream ordeal that he shut himself up in his apartments for several days and did not resume his royal duties till he had committed the whole experience to paper. His minister made it into a book under the title, *The Autobiography of Chandu*.

How, I ask, does this autobiography differ from those pertaining to and written in the waking state? His twenty years of suffering were real to Chandu, as also was his infatuation for Panji, his criminal life and the beating he received in prison. If you argue that the whole story was concocted in the king's own mind, so also were all his waking experiences, like those of all of us. Dreams also have their time and space and natural laws, just as the waking state has. As for Chandu, he is the experiencer of the three states. In

¹ There is also the very rare case of a Guru who, like Sri Ramana, continues to act as such after shedding the body. For his disciples also no guru in human form is necessary.—Editor.

the waking state he is a king, in a dream state a merchant who becomes an outcaste, while in the deep sleep state he plays no role but is still himself. Whereas the states come and go, their experiencer is always the same.

It is said that he who understands the ten verses of the Mandukya Upanishad has no need to study the other Upanishads because they show the world to be a state of the mind, just like the other two states, and also because what it leaves unsaid but inferred is as important as what it says. From its representing the three states as the only states through which the jiva passes in its apparent peregrination we have to conclude that death intro-

duces no new state for the ordinary man but only retains what he now experiences, namely the conditions of dream and sleep or an alternation of the two, till rebirth in a new body takes place and restores the waking state also. The same applies to loss of consciousness due to drugs, anaesthetics, fainting fits or the laya of hatha yoga, misnamed samadhi. But the Sage is above all three states both in this life and after death, being established permanently in Turiya, the Fourth, which is pure Consciousness, the nature of the Self, and from which there is no return to a body. He has freed himself from the pangs of birth and death forever. Such a one was Bhagavan Sri Ramana.

Devotee : The Buddhists deny the world whereas Hindu philosophy admits its existence but calls it unreal, isn't that so ?

Bhagavan : It is only a difference of point of view.

D. : They say that the world is created by Divine Energy (Shakti). Is the knowledge of unreality due to the veiling by illusion (Maya) ?

B. : All admit creation by the Divine Energy, but what is the nature of this energy ? It must be in conformity with the nature of its creation.

D. : Are there degrees of illusion ?

B. : Illusion itself is illusory. It must be seen by somebody outside it, but how can such a seer be subject to it ? So, how can he speak of degrees of it ?

You see various scenes passing on a cinema screen ; fire seems to burn buildings to ashes ; water seems to wreck ships ; but the screen on which the pictures are projected remains unburnt and dry. Why ? Because the pictures are unreal and the screen real.

Similarly, reflections pass through a mirror but it is not affected at all by their number or quality.

In the same way, the world is a phenomenon upon the substratum of the single Reality which is not affected by it in any way. Reality is only One.

Talk of illusion is due only to the point of view. Change your viewpoint to that of Knowledge and you will perceive the universe to be only Brahman. Being now immersed in the world, you see it as a real world ; get beyond it and it will disappear and Reality alone will remain.

— From *Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi*
in His Own Words.

ESSENCE OF THE GITA

Selected by BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

A devotee once complained to Bhagavan that it was hard to keep all 700 verses of the Gita in one's memory and asked whether it would not be possible to pick out the most important verses for remembrance. Bhagavan accordingly selected 42 verses which he arranged in an appropriate order. Further asked if any of these could be regarded as the most essential, he mentioned Book X, v. 20, that is the verse which comes fourth in his enumeration : "I am the Self, Oh Gudakesa, dwelling in the heart of every being; I am the beginning and the middle and also the end of all beings."

Since this issue of *The Mountain Path* is devoted to Bhagavan Ramana, we here reproduce this condensation in its traditional Ashram translation instead of our usual chapter.

The Song Celestial

Sanjaya said :

1. To him (Arjuna) thus filled with compassion and in despair, his eyes distressed and full of tears, spoke Madhusudana these words :
ii. 1.

The Blessed Lord said :

2. This body, Oh son of Kunti, is called the *kshetra* (field); Him who knows it, the Sages call, the *kshetrajna* (Knower of the field).
xiii. 1.

3. Know Me also as the Knower of the field in all the fields, Oh Bharata : knowledge of the field and of the Knower of the field I deem to be true Knowledge.
xiii. 2.

4. I am the Self, Oh Gudakesa, dwelling in the Heart of every being ; I am the beginning and the middle and also the end of all beings.
x. 20.

5. Of those born the death is certain, and certain the birth of those dead : therefore for what none can prevent thou shouldst not grieve.
ii. 27.

6. Never is He born nor does He die ; nor, having been, ceaseth He any more to be : unborn, abiding, eternal, ancient, He is not slain when the body is slain.
ii. 20.

7. Not to be cleft is He, not to be burnt is He, not even to be wetted nor yet to be

dried is He : abiding He is and all-pervading, stable, immovable, and from everlasting. ii. 24.

8. Know That to be indestructible whereby all this is pervaded ; of this Immutable none can work destruction.
ii. 17.

9. Of the non-existent there is no being, and of what exists there is no not-being ; the definite ascertainment of both is seen by the Seers of the Essence of Truth.
ii. 16.

10. As ether everywhere present is not polluted by virtue of its subtlety, even so the Self abiding everywhere is not polluted in the body.
xiii. 32.

11. Nor sun nor moon nor fire illumines It : and whither having gone men return not, That is My Supreme Abode.
xv. 6.

12. Unmanifested, Imperishable is this called ; and this they proclaim the Supreme State, from which when once attained they return not, That is My Supreme Abode. viii. 21.

13. Without pride, without delusion, victorious over the blemish of attachment, ever abiding in the Self, their desires abandoned, released from the pairs called pleasure and pain, they go undeluded to that Immutable Abode.
xv. 5.

14. He who forsakes the ordinances of the Scriptures, and acts under the influence of desire, attains not perfection, nor happiness, nor the Supreme State.
xvi. 23.

15. He who sees the Supreme Lord dwelling alike in all beings, perishing not as they perish, he it is who sees aright. xiii. 27.
16. By devotion alone, without 'otherness', Oh Arjuna, can I be known, seen and in essence entered, Oh Parantapa. xi. 54.
17. The faith of every man, Oh Bharata, accords with his essential character; man is instinct with faith: as that wherein a man has faith, so is he. xvii. 3.
18. He that has intense faith, and to that faith being devoted has the senses controlled, gains Knowledge; and having gained Knowledge he swiftly attains Supreme Peace. iv. 39.
19. To those who are self-attuned and who worship Me with loving devotion I give that union with understanding whereby they come to Me. x. 10.
20. Out of compassion for them and abiding in their Self I destroy with the resplendent Light of Knowledge their darkness born of ignorance. x. 11.
21. In those in whom ignorance is destroyed by Knowledge of the Self, Knowledge like the sun illumines That Supreme. v. 16.
22. High, they say, are the senses; higher than the senses is the mind; and higher than the mind is the understanding; but one who is higher than understanding is He. iii. 42.
23. Thus knowing Him to be higher than the understanding, steadying the self by the Self. Oh thou strong of arm, slay the enemy in the form of desire, so hard to overcome. iii. 43.
24. Just as a burning fire makes ashes of its fuel, Oh Arjuna, even so does the Fire of Knowledge make ashes of all works. iv. 37.
25. Him whose every enterprise is without desire or motive, whose actions are burnt up in the Fire of Knowledge, the wise call a Sage. iv. 19.
26. All around the austere Sages, free from desire and wrath, who have subdued their mind and have realised the Self, radiates the beatific Peace of Brahman. v. 26.
27. Little by little one should realise tranquillity, by judgment with a steadfast purpose; making the mind abide in the Self, one should think of nothing at all. vi. 25.
28. Towards whatsoever the mind wanders, being fickle and unsteady, therefrom it should be withdrawn and brought under the sway of the Self alone. vi. 26.
29. The saint who devoutly seeks Liberation, with the senses, mind, and intellect subdued, without desire, fear, or wrath, is indeed ever Liberated. v. 28.
30. He who is steadfast in yoga and looks on everything impartially, sees the Self dwelling in all beings, and all beings in the Self. vi. 29.
31. I undertake to secure and protect the welfare of those who without 'otherness' meditate on Me and worship Me, and who ever abide thus attuned. ix. 22.
32. Of these the Jnani, who is ever attuned, whose devotion is centred in Me, is the most excellent; because to the Jnani I am exceedingly dear and he is dear to Me. vii. 17.
33. At the end of many births the Jnani finds refuge in Me, recognizing that Vasudeva is all. Such a high Soul is very hard to find. vii. 19.
34. When one puts away, Oh Partha, all the desires that are in the mind, and in the Self alone, by the Self, is well satisfied, then is one called a man of steadfast wisdom. ii. 55.
35. That man attains Peace who, having cast away all desires, remains without longing, devoid of 'I' and 'mine'. ii. 71.
36. He by whom the world is not disturbed, and who is not disturbed by the world, free from exultation, impatience, fright, and agitation — he is dear to me. xii. 15.
37. He who holds honour and dishonour equal, equal the friendly party and the foe,

who has renounced all enterprise — he is said to have transcended the gunas. xiv. 25.

38. The man who revels here and now in the Self alone, with the Self is satisfied, and in the Self alone is content — for him there is no work to do. iii. 17.

39. For him there is no purpose either in doing work or in leaving it undone ; nor is there in all beings anything which serves him as a purpose. iii. 18.

40. Content to take what chance may bring, having transcended the pairs of oppo-

sites, free from ill-will and even-minded in success or failure, though he works he is not bound. iv. 22.

41. The Lord, Oh Arjuna, dwells in the Heart of every being and His mysterious power spins round all beings as if set on the wheel. xviii. 61.

42. To Him alone surrender, Oh Bharata, with all thy being ; by His Grace shalt thou obtain Peace Supreme, the Abode Eternal. xviii. 62.

Mr. Thompson, a very quiet young gentleman who has been staying in India for some years and studying Hindu philosophy as an earnest student, asked : *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* says : 'I am the prop for Brahman.' In another place it says : 'I am in the heart of each one.' Thus the different aspects of the Ultimate Principle are revealed. I take it that there are three aspects, namely : (1) the transcendental, (2) the immanent, and (3) the cosmic. Is Realization to be in any of these or in all of them ? Coming to the transcendental from the cosmic, Vedanta discards the names and forms as being *maya*. Again Vedanta also says that the whole is Brahman, as illustrated by gold and ornaments of gold. How are we to understand the truth ?

Bhagavan : The *Gita* says : *Brahmano hi pratishtaham*. If that *aham* is known, the whole is known.

Devotee : That is the immanent aspect only.

B. : You now think that you are an individual ; outside you there is the universe and beyond the universe is God. So, there is the idea of separateness. This idea must go. For God is not separate from you or the cosmos. The *Gita* also says : I am the Self, O Gudakesa, seated in the heart of all beings. I am the beginning and the middle and also the end of all beings. Thus God is not only in the heart of all, He is the prop of all, He is the source of all, their abiding place and their end. All proceed from Him, have their stay in Him, and finally resolve into Him. Therefore He is not separate.

— From *Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi*
in His Own Words.

SRI ANANDASHRAM SWAMI'S VISIT TO SRI RAMANASRAMAM

By DR. K. SHIVA RAO *

It is difficult to recall events which took place over two decades ago. But the visit of His Holiness Srimat Anandashram Swamiji to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, being out of the ordinary, is vividly imprinted in my memory.

His Holiness with a small party was touring the South in a car, and on his return journey arrived at Tiruvannamalai on an evening in October, 1941. At that time, the late Dr. M. Anantanarayana Rao had almost completed building a house about a furlong from Sri Ramanasramam. I was living there at that time. Dr. & Mrs. Anantanarayana Rao were still in Madras and arrived the following morning.

Along with a few friends I duly received His Holiness at the roadside with *nadaswaram* and conducted him to the house where a room was specially prepared for his use.

The next morning at about 8 o'clock there was the memorable audience with the Maharshi. Bhagavan was as usual sitting on the couch in the old hall with his back to the east; he turned to the doorway at the south the moment His Holiness entered. They greeted each other with smiles. His Holiness sat on a seat on the floor. For over half an hour they merely gazed at each other. No words were exchanged. The audience then terminated.



I must add that for vast numbers of persons a darshan and the silent gaze of Bhagavan solved problems and communicated peace. Of course when any sadhakas asked questions, they were appropriately, though briefly, answered. Bhagavan usually spoke in Tamil and some devotee nearby acted as interpreter for those who did not know that language.

At about 4 in the afternoon, the same day or the next, I accompanied His Holiness and the party, all barefooted as usual, on a *pradakshina* around the holy Arunachala Hill, which covers about eight miles and a half. On our way back we entered the great Arunachaleswara Temple and offered archana to the deities.

Dr. M. Anantanarayana Rao and I did *pada puja* to His Holiness during his stay.

His Holiness was persuaded to stay for three days, though he had programmed for only two. It was an extremely happy occasion for all of us.

* For whom see the obituary notice in Jan. 1965.

SRI BHAGAVAN'S TRIUMPHANT GAZE

By PROF. N. R. KRISHNAMURTI

My First Darshan



It was in April 1914 that I first saw him. On our way to Tirupati, my parents, uncles and their families halted at Tiruvannamalai. Our party of about twenty, including half-a-dozen youngsters, proceeded to Virupaksha Cave for Sri Bhagavan's darshan. I was then about fifteen years old. I made my obeisance to Sri Bhagavan along with the rest. Sri Bhagavan's benign gaze was fixed on me ; but I paid little attention to him as I ran about the place along with the other boys. We found a good-sized beautiful white conch shell inside the cave. We boys had a lot of fun blowing it. Nobody troubled to prevent us.

After my return home to Tiruchirappalli, when my father was practising as a lawyer, a great change came over me. Till then I had never cared to go to any temple. But now I felt dragged as it were by some mysterious fascination to the huge and magnificent Mathrubhutesvara Lingam in the rock temple in the centre of the city. I would go up the hill almost every evening. Once inside the temple, a great peace overwhelmed me and the joy I felt was indescribable. All the same I was, as usual, keenly interested in my studies. I was then in the S.S.L.C. class. Notwithstanding this spiritual diversion, I maintained a high rank, taking the first place in the school in English, in the S.S.L.C. examination that year.

When I entered college a further change came over me. This was noticeable during the weekly hour for English Composition in

the class room. The tutor would announce the subject for composition as soon as the class assembled. Every student would finish his composition during the hour. But alas for poor me ! I would just write the subject heading on the paper, sit statue-like for the whole hour, and then hand over the blank sheets to the tutor. No ripple of thought could cross my mind which, though fully conscious, stood like a block of stone, immobile, I simply could not muster the thoughts even for a few lines, however much I wished.

The above state continued for the two years of my Intermediate class. Even today it is a wonder to me how I passed the Intermediate examination with just a few marks short of a first, to enable me to secure the coveted seat in the B.A. Honours course. I had to take Physics, though my original desire was to take English Literature. That could not be, as I had done poorly in English with just a pass mark. Judged from this distance of time it looks as if I had lost the volition of free original thinking so much needed in English, though the capacity to remember and repeat facts taken from books was not much impaired.

It was rough sailing during the years of my Physics Honours course. My efforts to study books brought on a very severe ache inside my brain. I would seek relief in closing my eyes and lying still most of the time I was not in class. I wonder how I got my yearly promotions. It must have been due to the kindness of my sympathetic Professor through whom Sri Bhagavan's grace must have operated.

Second Darshan

In January 1919, during the second year of my honours course, I had occasion to visit my sister in Tiruvannamalai. The very morning I arrived there from Tiruchirappalli I had darshan of Sri Bhagavan at Skandasramam. This time also Sri Bhagavan's gracious look was forcibly impressed on me. Returning to my sister's house after darshan, I lay down to sleep after breakfast. It was not ordinary sleep. For over two hours I was fully conscious and at the same time totally unconscious of my body and its surroundings. It was with some difficulty I was roused for lunch. Even after being roused I felt that everything around was like a dream. Of course, people around me saw my puzzled expression and made fun of me.

After my return to Tiruchirappalli, I slowly recovered my ability to study, but I had to extend my three year course to four years. I was lucky to get a second in the University lists when I did take the B.A. Honours degree examination in 1921.

Third Darshan

My third darshan was about the last week of June in the year 1922. Mahatma Gandhi had started the Satyagraha movement against the British Government in India. His non-violent civil resisters were being ruthlessly beaten, killed or imprisoned. I was angry that a person of such high standing as Sri Bhagavan was not moving a finger for the country's libera-

tion. Humiliation and suffering of the good and exaltation of the wicked was the order of the day. All this could never happen I told myself, if there was an omniscient, benevolent, omnipotent God. This Maharshi was wasting time uniting a hypothetical soul with another hypothetical Oversoul or God. I became an agnostic and made it my business to fight anybody who, neglecting the practicalities of life, dared to postulate the existence of soul or God. Here was my opportunity to fight the Maharshi, let him dare to speak a word of soul or God.

I went to Sri Ramanasramam, just then shifted to its present premises where the holy remains of Sri Bhagavan's Mother stand enshrined. I was accompanied by my friend, the late T. K. Sundaresa Iyer and my brother-in-law Kuppuswami Iyer. Sri Bhagavan was alone, seated on a bench placed under a tree. Earlier I had told my companions that I would not prostrate before the Maharshi. But lo! a strange thing happened. The instant we reached his presence, I had fallen flat, face down, before him in the traditional mode of prostration. This of course caused in me some embarrassment, which, however, I soon got over. Fixing a steady look at the Maharshi's face, I jerked out my question in Tamil "You are now sitting like this, but what is your next state (i.e. after death)"? My idea was to elicit from him the reply that there is a soul which survives the dissolution of the body and gets united with the Oversoul or God, so that I could fight it out and prove the contrary. Minutes passed, but no reply was forthcoming. Two pairs of eyes were interlocked in a steady gaze, and there was absolute silence. The thought barely passed within me, "Is this man taking shelter in this silence to avoid answering an inconvenient question".

Just then Sri Bhagavan's ringing voice exploded, "You said, state; what do you mean by state?". If a bomb shell had exploded under my seat, it could not have been

so shattering as this sudden counter question most unexpectedly delivered. I must answer him. I began to think : " Well, I did not ask him about the body which would be buried or burnt. There is something inside the body, the thinking apparatus, the so called mind ; it is about this I asked. Now if I say that the question is about the state of the mind, he will naturally ask me to define mind, and so I must have the answer ready for such a question. So within myself I raised the enquiry " What is mind ? ". But alas ! no answer was forthcoming ; my mind was paralysed, its thought power dead ! Like a helpless mute, I sat. Just then, there was a fierce glow in Sri Bhagavan's eyes which held my eyes in a tight grip ; a radiant smile of victory spread over his divine face. I lost sense of body and world, the insignificant I that I was

being swallowed up in pure Awareness-Being in which all name, form, time, space and action were utterly lost, in a state of utter silence a-glow with self effulgent I-AM-I-AM without beginning or end. Recovering consciousness of body and surroundings, with the inner glow still effulgent, there was no more question to be asked or answered. Revelling in the joy of that thrilling defeat, I quickly prostrated and made a headlong flight.

Wonder of wonders is this matchless gaze of Sri Bhagavan's, how potent, how joyous. It cannot be expressed in words. From my fifteenth year till this day when I am sixty-seven, that gaze is still rivetted on me, and the absorption of the ego in Arunachala-Siva-Ramana which is pure spirit continues with ever increasing vigour.

A MESSAGE FROM H. H. SRI RAMA DEVI

The redemptive grace of the Satguru is the most outstanding contributory factor in spiritual unfoldment. The spiritual power activated through the mystic touch of the Master transports the consciousness of the disciple to the realm of transcendent wisdom.

Maharshi Ramana personified the force and purity of spiritual silence. By his inherence in wisdom and his spontaneity in Self-abidance he revealed in himself the truth epitomised in

the Mahavakyas that the soul is identical with the Absolute.

Maharshi's life was a silent hymn of praise to the Supreme and a ceaseless teaching of the mystery of life and universe. In him was a wonderful blend of all-transcending aloofness and active sympathy for suffering souls.

May his silent grace continue to inspire and illumine all his devotees and all aspiring souls who look to him for guidance.

In a sense, speaking of Self-realization is a delusion. It is only because people have been under the delusion that the non-Self is the Self and the unreal the Real, that they have to be weaned out of it by the other delusion called Self-realization ; because actually the Self always is the Self and there is no such thing as realizing it. Who is to realize what, and how, when all that exists is the Self and nothing but the Self.

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.

THE WHITE RADIANCE OF ETERNITY

By PROF. K. SUBRAHMANYAM



About a quarter of a century ago, a group of four persons, myself in the number, went to Tiruvannamalai to have our first darshan of Bhagavan. We slept overnight in the town and set out for the Ashram in the morning, after the usual bath. On arriving at the entrance to the Ashram grounds, we paused and surveyed what lay before us. At some distance within was a big white building that dominated the scene. In between were a number of sheds, some of which we would have to pass and some we might have to enter. At the end of our short walk of exploration we would arrive at the white building and there hoped to have our darshan. With this plan in mind, we first entered the Publication Department of the Ashram and then went into the Ashram Office, both of which were in the same building. Then, following some persons who were moving ahead, we walked towards the adjoining shed:

On stepping across the threshold, occurred the most overwhelming experience of my life. For here, just on the other side of the threshold, gazing full at us, the new arrivals, was Bhagavan himself! Nothing had prepared us to find him here. Not a whisper had escaped from within the hall; there had been no unusual gathering or movement of people outside it. But, here in perfect silence sat Bhagavan and those who had come seeking him; he, partly sitting and partly reclining on a sofa; they, seated facing him, in rows on the floor for the whole length of the hall, not

less than fifty of them. Into this fellowship of serenity, seemingly waiting to receive us, we stepped, without a moment's preparation of the mind, and were absorbed into it the same instant. It was as well that the mind had not set about preparing itself, for then, on receiving Bhagavan's gaze, it might have proceeded to respond self-consciously. Taken unawares, the mind was overwhelmed before it could even feebly affirm its existence. In its place was Bhagavan's silence — awareness with only peace for its content.

What we had hitherto called "silence" had been very different; a respite from speech, perhaps to replenish the exhausted energy for the sake of speech yet to come; or a manner of "inward chatter", a succession of jerky thoughts whose utterance was only inaudible to others. Even such "silence", if it is pervasive or prolonged, seems to most people abnormal, morbid, weird — even suggestive of danger and calamity. The story goes that King Ajatasatru of Maghada once set out to pay a visit to the Buddha and his *bhikshus* (said to number more than a thousand) who were then residing in a big mango-grove at a little

distance from the royal capital, Rajagriha. The king with his large retinue approached the grove, entered it and even proceeded into it for some distance ; when panic seized him. Turning to his guide he asked, " Surely some ambush is laid for me here and you are leading me into it ? Not a sneeze have I heard, not a clearing of the throat from that large *sangha* which dwells here, as you said ! " Men recognize " normalcy " only in continued speech, inward when it is not outward. Speech is the ego's customary manner of self-affirmation, its habitual satisfaction. Where the ego is aggressive, speech is strident ; swearing and oaths are the ego's violent explosions. For this reason it must have been that Jesus asked people to communicate with others with a quiet " yea, yea " or " nay, nay " and never to swear. But if one identifies one's being with the ego and if the only proof of being alive which one recognizes is the mind's incessant chatter (outward or inward), how can one find true silence — Bhagavan's presence — endurable ? Our feeble intelligence can be only indirectly aware of a bright, white smooth surface, by the scribbles on it. If there is no scribble, there is no whiteness for us. It

was by Grace that at the moment when we stepped over the threshold of that shed our minds were not engaged in scribbling or interested in any scribble. We saw the pure whiteness in a flash.

That moment vanished, but my being had been fertilized. Silence and seclusion could not fill me with dread thereafter. The life of a recluse can be more charged with power (I could at least understand) than the lives of those who shout and rush about. The distant peak *is* a peak, not an appearance among the clouds. Nirvana, Sunyata, Mindlessness, Nirguna Brahman or Nirvikalpa Samadhi are terms that need to be received with reverent attention, not with frightened bewilderment. In course of time, one might enter into the truth of Lao Tzu's saying, that though thirty spokes meet in the hub of the wheel, the hole, the void at the hub-centre, is the wheel's *raison d'être*, its true use.

The speech and the silence that we ordinarily know are at the same level ; they are modes of each other. But Bhagavan's Silence, lying deeper, could well bear both of them on its surface.

A TRIBUTE FROM CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS

Apart from being Founder President of the London Buddhist Society, *Christmas Humphreys* is the most widely read English writer on Buddhism today. We have pleasure in publishing this tribute he has sent us :

The spiritual grandeur of the late Ramana Maharshi is unrivalled in the twentieth century. Only those still bound in the limitations of some particular religion could challenge this belief which, as a Buddhist, I have held since I first met those who had the good fortune to sit at the Master's feet. And when I

read his recorded conversations with those who sought his wisdom I recognized that conscious identity with the Unborn, Unoriginated, Unformed, as the Buddha called the Absolute. May I honour myself by paying humble tribute to one who left the world with such an example of attainment.

DIVINE GLIMPSES

By 'VISHNU'

Bhagavan is God Himself and in saying this I do not refer to any of the personal gods of any religion but to the Universal Principle or Pure Consciousness. I dislike to compare him with any past personage, for there is no meaning in comparing Incarnations of that One Principle which has no second; but yet for our understanding if at all we want to compare, it can only be with Christ or Buddha.

I never forgot, whenever I was talking with him or sitting in his presence, that here was God sitting and talking. It is our greatest fortune that the Supreme Consciousness appearing in the garb of a human body graciously undertook to come down to our level of understanding and bore the tremendous task of imparting to us the Truth of Atma Vidya. Such a thought always made me understand him and his talks better and more clearly.

Once a few very learned Sanskrit scholars were sitting in the Old Hall discussing portions of the Upanishads and other scriptural texts with Bhagavan. Bhagavan was giving them proper explanations and it was a sight to remember and adore! At the same time,



I felt genuinely in my heart, 'Oh, how great these people are and how fortunate they are to be so learned and to have such deep understanding and be able to discuss with our Bhagavan. Compared with them, what am I, a zero in scriptural learning?' I felt miserable. After the pundits had taken leave Bhagavan turned to me and said: "What?", looking into my eyes and studying my thoughts. Then, without even giving me an opportunity to explain, he continued: "This is only the husk! All this book learning and capacity to repeat the scriptures by memory is absolutely no use. To know the Truth, you need not

The author of this article is one of the seniormost disciples of Bhagavan and one also who enjoyed special privileges. He was one of the few who helped Bhagavan in his work in the kitchen described elsewhere in this issue. He was also one of the few chosen to witness the drawing up and signing of the Will by which Bhagavan left the management of the Ashram to his collateral descendants, that is to the family of his brother Niranjanananda Swami (for an account of whom see our *Ashram Bulletin* of Jan. 1964.) It even happened on occasion that Bhagavan postponed some small function when his professional work called him away and held it only after his return.

When he first went to Bhagavan as a young man he was a modernist and a free-thinker. He told the two friends who took him that he would not bow down to him. He bowed down all right; and it was he who stayed and they who left! We are grateful to him for giving a few items from his vast fund of reminiscences.

undergo all this torture of learning. Not by reading do you get the Truth. BE QUIET, that is Truth. BE STILL, that is God."

Then very graciously he turned to me again and there was an immediate change in his tone and attitude. He asked me : "Do you shave yourself?" Bewildered by this sudden change, I answered, trembling, that I did.

"Ah, for shaving you use a mirror, don't you? You look into the mirror and then shave your face; you don't shave the image in the mirror. Similarly all the scriptures are meant only to show you the Way to Realization. They are meant for practice and attainment. Mere book learning and discussions are comparable to a man shaving the image in the mirror." From that day onwards the sense of inferiority that I had been feeling vanished once for all.

One more assurance from Bhagavan which also he gave as a personal instruction is of absolute value for me in my sadhana. I cried to him that I knew nothing about Vedanta nor could I practise austerity, being a householder; so I prayed to him to help me by showing the Reality or the Way to It. I also frankly admitted that Bhagavan's own method of Self Enquiry was too hard for me. He then graciously said : "You know *Ulladu Narpadu* (Truth in Forty Verses). It imparts Pure Truth, deals with It and explains It. Go on reading it verse by verse. The words of the verses, will in course of time vanish, and Pure Truth (Sat) alone will shine, like the snake relinquishing its skin and coming out shining." This is my sadhana.

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One day I was sitting near Bhagavan's couch and I felt puzzled by the ancient teaching that everything that appears in the world is maya or illusion. I wondered how it could be, when I saw Bhagavan, the couch on which he sat, the barrier separating me from Bhagavan and myself. How could all these be

false? I asked Bhagavan, explaining my doubt : "Bhagavan, can all of us be unreal and non-existent? Please enlighten me." Bhagavan laughed and asked me whether I had any dream the previous night. I replied that I saw several people lying asleep. He said : "Suppose now I ask you to go and wake all those people in the dream and tell them they are not real, how absurd it would be! That is how it is to me. There is nothing but the dreamer, so where does the question of dream people, real or unreal, arise; still more of waking them up and telling them that they are not real? We are all unreal, why do you doubt it? That alone is real." After this explanation I never had any doubt about the unreality of the objective world. I constantly feel the reality in their unreal nature.

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On another occasion he said : "Everything is unreal, like dream objects. However at a certain stage there exists Truth, the Reality, and World, the unreality; and a Jnani's job is to awaken the ignorant to the fact that what they see and feel is unreal and that the Reality is their own Being. This can be compared to an elephant dreaming of a lion and suddenly waking up and finding that the lion is unreal and that itself alone is real. The elephant is the jiva or individual, the dream is the unreal world and the lion, the Jnani or Guru. The Guru is the link between the unreal and the real." On another occasion he said : "There is no Jnani (Realized Man), Jnana (Knowledge) alone is."

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About the Jivanmukta, Realized while still living, Bhagavan said : "The Jivanmukta is one without any thoughts or sankalpas (inherent tendencies). The thought process ceases completely in him. Some Power makes him do things. So he is not the doer but the one who is made to do."

RECOLLECTION OF SRI RAMANA JAYANTHI

By D. S. SASTRI

D. S. Sastri, the author of this article, is writing for the first time in THE MOUNTAIN PATH. He is, however, already well known to our readers, being the 'Brother' to whom Nagamma's letters were written.

On Friday the 7th of January, 1966, the birthday of Sri Ramana Maharshi will be celebrated at the Ashram, when devotees from far and near will assemble to pay homage to the great sage. Mahapurushas of this type are born once in several centuries for the uplift of mankind. Some of them teach the path of Karma Yoga, some the path of Bhakthi Yoga and some the path of Jnana Yoga. Bhagavan belongs to the last category.

At birth, everyone enjoys bliss; is the embodiment of Ananda. Very soon thereafter, the pangs of hunger make the new born cry for food and when that desire is satisfied, the child sleeps soundly and relapses into its original state of bliss. As the child grows, the need for clothing arises and in due course for housing also. Thereafter desires multiply and a family grows around. A person thus gets buried in the joys and sorrows of family life and believes that this mundane world is real, forgetting his original state of bliss.

Bhagavan therefore tells everyone to find out who he really is. That is the vichara marga — the path of Self-Enquiry which he taught to people who approached him for enlightenment. He maintained that that path was very easy. He used to tell the devotees "First find out who you are. You were ori-



ginally at the time of birth, the embodiment of bliss. You have subsequently built around you this samsara — family — and have created for yourself a world of continuous and unending sorrow and misery. If you give up the feeling of ego — this family, this world and the like — and realise that your Self is unconnected with the rest, you will then attain Moksha — (freedom from bondage) ”.

If this path — call it Vichara Marga, i.e. Self-Enquiry or Jnana Marga, i.e. path of knowledge — is so very easy, one may well ask why people do not take to it *en masse*. The path is perhaps easy to understand but extremely difficult to follow. What every person wants is enough food and clothing and a roof to live under. If however all these necessities of life are provided and one is asked to live all alone, will one do so? No: one cannot do so for the simple reason that man is a 'social animal' and desires grow in abundance wherever one may happen to live.

The greatest punishment in jail life is said to be solitary confinement. Every person has desires and these grow in proportion to their fulfilment; and there is no limit to them. With desires sorrows come. Just as there is no end to desires, there is no end to sorrows.

That is why ancients have said "*Kowpeena vantah khalu Bhagyavantah.*" "He who owns only a loin cloth is really the richest." Hence it is, the sannyasi is enjoined to have only "*Karathala Bhiksha : Taruthala vasah,*" i.e. eating only as much of the two palms of his hands can hold and living under the shade of trees. The sannyasi is expected to be absorbed at all times in his Self. That is called Sat-Chit-Ananda. That is Brahman.

Bhagavan instructed all who approached him to pursue the enquiry "Who am I?" with the assurance that whoever does so suc-

cessfully will realise the Truth ultimately. No one can say how many understood this great truth or believed in the path of Self-Enquiry but this much is certain that the lives of countless people have been revolutionised by their contact with Bhagavan and their minds have consequently been turned towards God. That is what Mahapurushas do when they are born in this world. These birthday celebrations are intended mainly to remind us of those great souls so that we could follow their example and precepts to the best of our abilities.

NO FURTHER CHANGE

By PROF. G. V. SUBBARAMAYYA

Questioned as to what changes he underwent after coming to Arunachala, Sri Bhagavan replied : "I am ever the same. There is neither sankalpa (will) nor change in me. Till I reached the Mango Grove I remained indifferent, with my eyes shut. Afterwards I opened my eyes and began functioning actively. Otherwise there is no change whatsoever in me."

"But Bhagavan," said one, "we do note many outward changes in you."

"Yes," replied Bhagavan, "that is because you see me as this body. So long as you identify yourself with your body you cannot but see me as an embodied being."



Devotee : Do a person's actions in this life affect him in future births?

Bhagavan : Are you born now? Why do you think of future births? The truth is that there is neither birth nor death. Let him who is born think of death and palliatives for it.

— From *Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi in His Own Words.*

EASY YET DIFFICULT

By G. L. N.

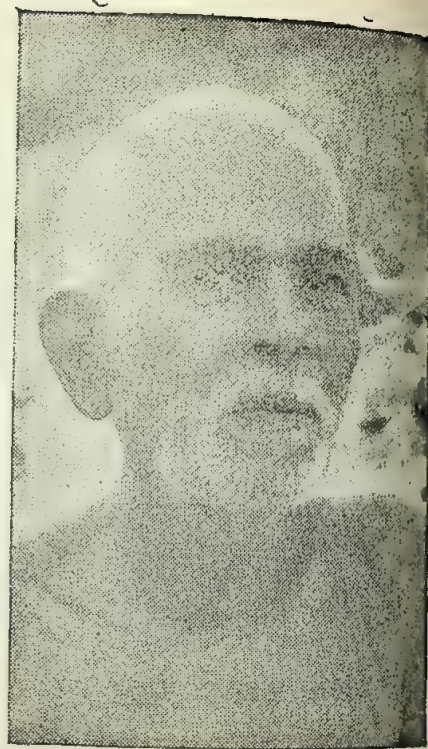
This is a brief account of how my contact with Sri Ramana helped me. Truth transcends individuality ; what I depict is my limited personal understanding of him.

My contact with him began in 1930. It was by Divine Providence, not by my planning, that I was able to spend a continuous period of three years at Sri Ramanasramam. It was a great blessing.

I was a science graduate. I had learned about the atomic structure of the universe and how matter finally resolves into energy and the mind also is a form of energy. So the entire world of mind and matter, when traced to its source, is one uniform Energy or God or whatever you choose to call it.

This was my attitude of mind when I first went to Sri Ramanasramam. Bhagavan was then translating his 'Ulladu Narpadu' (Forty Verses) into Telugu at the request of Yogi Ramiah. After finishing it he threw the book to me and said : "You are an Andhra ; see if there are any mistakes of grammar in it." This was an act of grace, for it was that translation which was responsible for turning my mind inwards and setting it on the right path.

The essence of what Bhagavan said to me in my talks with him was : "You say that on final analysis all that I see or think or do is one ; but that really comprises two notions : the all that is seen and the I that does the seeing, thinking and doing, and says 'I'. Which of these two is the more real, true and important ? Obviously the seer, since the seen is dependent on it. So turn your attention to the seer who is the source of your 'I' and realize that. This is the real task. Up to now you have been studying the object, not the



subject ; now find out for what reality this word 'I' stands. Find the entity which is the source of the expression 'I'. That is the Self, the Self of all selves."

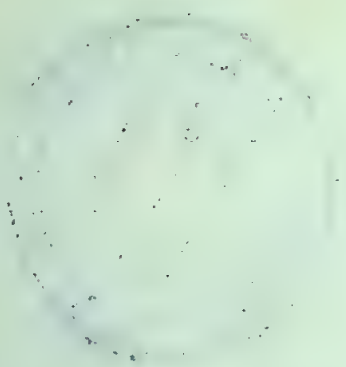
This direct, simple teaching was like a tonic to me. It swept away the unrest and confusion that till then had haunted my mind. It is, of course, the essence of 'Ulladu Narpadu' and the central theme of all Bhagavan's writings. The simplicity of it made me burst out : "Then Bhagavan, Self-realization is very easy, just as you say in the poem 'Atma Vidya' !"

Bhagavan smiled and said : "Yes, yes, it seems so at first, but there is difficulty too. You have to overcome your present false values and wrong identification. Therefore the quest requires concentrated effort and steadfast abidance in the Source when this is reached."

However, even while warning me, he also added words of solace : "But don't let that deter you. The rise of the urge to seek for the 'I' is itself an act of Divine Grace. Once this urge gets hold of you, you are in its clutches. The grip of Divine Grace never relaxes and finally devours you, just as the prey in a tiger's jaws is never allowed to escape."



Those who take refuge at the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Lord of Mercy, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi — their minds freed of attachment to riches, lands and relatives, and to caste and the like, and ever made purer by seeking Thy Benign Grace — these rid themselves (of the misery) of darkness, and in the steady light of Thy ever-protecting Grace, which shines like the golden rays of the rising sun, they abide happy, sunk in the Ocean of Bliss.



There was a tale told at the Lotus Feet of
the Great Lord of Mercy, Bhagwan Sri Kṛṣṇa,
that in the first of attachment to
the world, and relatives, and to caste and the
land, and ever made poorer by seeking Thy benign
Grace—those in themselves (of the misery) of
darkness, and in the steady light of Thy ever-
protecting Grace, which shines like the golden
ray of the rising sun, they abide happy, sunk in
the Ocean of Bliss.

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JANAKI MATA

It has become our custom to publish in each issue an article about some saint, mystic or guru. We had decided that in an issue devoted entirely to Sri Bhagavan this would not be quite appropriate, but just before it was time to go to the press we received chapters of a still unpublished life of the woman ecstatic Janaki Mata who has a considerable following and at the same time is a whole-hearted devotee of Sri Bhagavan, so we decided to construct an article by stringing together extracts from this.

While occupying herself all day long with household work, Mata sought God by adoration, self-surrender and intense devotion and prayed for his mysterious divine force to guide every step of hers. From the moment she first came to Bhagavan Sri Ramana he was her all. For her Bhagavan Ramana represented the confluence of manifold manifestations of the pantheon. The pace of progress was accelerated thenceforth. The daily puja took a different turn. Names and forms lost their significance. Instead of doing puja to a particular deity, she used to worship whatever manifestation of the Formless presented itself at the moment. Once it would be Krishna and the next instant Siva, and then all forms ended by merging into the Paramatma, the All-Per-vading Spirit. One thing was clear to her : that the Formless God assuming one form or another for a brief time and finally withdrawing into the endless tract of the Void and becoming the Cosmic Self, would not be of much help to her for practical guidance and that the one guide on whom she could depend was Bhagavan Ramana. "There is only one thing worth achieving," she decided ; "the root cause of the universe, the One without a second. I must attain it, realize it and experience it with Bhagavan's Grace."

She decided that her duty to the family was over and she could seek the Goal as a celibate or recluse. Doctor (her husband) assured her of his whole-hearted co-operation. "Though



you are still in the family, you may live as though in an Ashram," he said. . . .

Mata was physically and mentally exhausted by her experiences, so Doctor took her to Sri Ramanasramam. Sitting among the other devotees in the hall there in the evening she reflected with a heavy heart that there was only half an hour till the evening chanting started and then she would have to leave as they had

to be back home next day. It was said that without the guidance of a Guru an aspirant could fall into mental disorder, and Bhagavan, who was God to her, was reported to have said that he was not a Guru and had no disciples.¹ What was she to do? How could she find an occasion to speak with him alone and ask him?

Probably in response to her thoughts, Bhagavan suddenly got up from the couch and went out of the hall, contrary to his daily routine. Considering this a gesture of the Grace of the Lord, Sri Mata also went out. Every one else remained seated. After waiting for a while, Mata saw him returning from the side of the cowshed and hastened to meet him. Coming to him, she prostrated herself at his holy feet in obeisance with tears of joy trickling down her cheeks. The attendant ordered her roughly to get up and not obstruct Bhagavan's path, but Bhagavan told him curtly to stand aside. Mataji quickly poured out her heart before him, telling him of her spiritual experiences and beseeching him for protection and removal of the obstacles in her quest for Liberation. She mentioned also her fear of becoming deranged through having no Guru to guide her on the quest. Bhagavan, whose compassion is infinite, replied: "Who told you that you have no Guru? I am here as your Guru. Nothing will upset your mind."

On the night of October 12, 1937, when all around her were asleep, Janaki Mata felt what seemed to her like a powerful explosion in the back of her head. She leapt up from bed, unable to bear the strain. There was a flare-up along her spinal cord from muladhara at the base of the spine right up to sahasrara in the brain. She saw a brilliance like lightening all along the sushumna between these two points. There was a sort of conflagration followed by flames, some blue and some like lightning, ascending from the muladhara to the sahasrara with a hissing sound like that of an angry serpent. It even tried to burst open the top of

her skull and she had the impression that the force was trying to escape into the ether beyond. She did not think her physical body would stand it. She woke up the others who were sleeping nearby and climbed up to the open terrace on the roof. She did not want to die there, as she was only a guest, so she prayed that her body should last at least till she reached home or the Doctor would be terribly upset. Still the strain did not stop but continued as violent as before. She turned then to the light in her and said to it: "If you are going to leave the body do so unencumbered by wants, desires and worries so as not to get tossed into another womb for another reincarnation. But if you are not quite sure of Liberation wait till I am in the holy presence of my Sat-Guru, Bhagavan Sri Ramana."

On being thus addressed the mysterious force gave up its efforts to burst open the skull. Its activities within the body continued but became bearable and much less unpleasant. The body seemed to be disabled. She could neither lie down nor sit but had to recline against a pile of cushions. Both inwardly and outside her, brilliant and mysterious scenes ablaze with luminosity rushed past, including figures of the gods. The light inside with the effulgence of a hundred thousand suns kept rushing up with rocket speed and dashing against the skull. It carried in it a galaxy of all the deities she had worshipped at various times till then. . . .

Next day Sri Mata was taken home to Cudallore. There she was bed-ridden and continued to have a series of spiritual experiences. Each time the kundalini shot up there was purging of the bowels. It seemed as if she was purging away the dross of a multitude of previous births. . . . The thirsty kundalini had

¹ Bhagavan's saying this must be understood to imply that the Guru, being beyond duality, cannot postulate any relationship for himself. When Alan Chadwick asked him about it once he explained this and added that from the point of view of the disciple the Guru-disciple relationship is real.

eaten away the flesh of her body and consumed half her blood. Solid food was out of the question. She could take only an ounce or two of liquid food per day. This state of affairs continued for twenty-six days. She bore the ordeal with exemplary patience. Supernatural powers began to manifest in her. While lying in bed one day her body began to rise slowly in the air, retaining its horizontal position, until it was floating in mid air several feet above the bed. Her daughter's mother-in-law, who was lying in the next bed, cried out, asking her what was the matter. She replied: "I am not interested in acquiring or exhibiting supernatural powers. Let them not manifest in me!" On this the body slowly came down again to the bed.

The saying of Sri Ramakrishna that if such a state continued for more than twenty-seven days the body would collapse, unable to bear the strain, flashed through her mind. It had already lasted twenty-six days. She explained this to Doctor and begged him to take her to Bhagavan. He was reluctant at first owing to her great weakness but allowed himself to be persuaded. Bhagavan cast his gracious glance upon her and bade her be without fear. Without even touching her he injected a current of divine strength into her. It was like transmitting electric current from a generator. Next day she took leave of Bhagavan and returned to Cuddalore in her normal state.

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The wonderful experience that Sri Mata had stiffened her body and benumbed her physical faculties. The sahasrara in the crown of the head was illumined by a radiant and delightful light. She was in a state of grandeur which cannot be put in words. Even the most eloquent description would fail to do justice to that grand and lofty state. The feeling of delight and tranquillity surpasses all imagination. All the pleasures of the physical world pale into insignificance when compared to that Eternal Quietude.

Nevertheless the kundalini still continued trying to break through the sahasrara and continue her journey beyond the physical body. Sri Mata cried out aloud: "What are you trying to do? I and Bhagavan Sri Ramana are inseparable! Against the downpour of the Guru's Grace you can do me no harm."² On this the force in her desisted from its attempts and her body recovered its suppleness and sense of feeling. After this experience she told Doctor that she had at last attained her long cherished goal and been set free from the round of birth and death, so the purpose of her earthly life was fulfilled.

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It was three days before Doctor could join Sri Mata at Ramanasramam. When he did he found her completely changed. She had a detached mind and the freedom of a parrot that has escaped from its cage into the open expanse of the sky. Just as its joy in freedom prevents it returning again to its cage, so Sri Mata was not in a mood to get entangled in family life again. Doctor spent a sleepless night. He had undergone the grief of separation at the death of his first wife. Now his second wife was lost to him even though still alive. He was brooding "Have I not given her all my love and affection? Have I not sacrificed my personal desires to hers, though I had the authority to exercise my rights? Have I not done everything conducive to the attainment of her goal? I have given her all the comforts of a happy life. Why is she indifferent to me now?"

It grieved him to leave her at the Ashram without even any money, but she told him that her inner voice was commanding her to be a sannyasini, and as that mode of life suited her

² The bursting of the kundalini through the crown of the head is not necessarily fatal or even injurious. It is, in fact, the normal process, as described by Unnamulai in her article 'An Experience of Kundalini' in our issue of April 1965. It can be dangerous if the aspirant is not ripe for it. The kundalini path or process in general can be dangerous if not guided by a Guru.

taste she would adopt it and remain at the Ashram for the rest of her life. The Doctor and their children were stricken with grief but their appeals and even their tears had no effect. Doctor wrote to his various relatives telling them that Sri Mata was lost to the family. He decided to leave an aunt for a month to see to her welfare and return home to Kakinada with the children next day.

Next morning, however, while she was sitting in front of Bhagavan, the thought flashed through her mind that she had pro-

mised him to remain in the family for five more years. She therefore immediately said that she would go back with Doctor to Kakinada. Bhagavan gazed steadily at her and then said: "Did I ask you to become a sannyasini? Look at me: I have not taken sannyas and do not wear the ochre robe. You have only one family but I have to shoulder the burden of all these devotees and their families." It dawned on her then that renunciation must be in the heart and that inner purity is more important than outer renunciation.

YOU WILL KNOW IN DUE COURSE

By ACHARYASWAMI

Once I mustered courage to put a question to Bhagavan about transmigration or reincarnation. I put my question in English and it was translated by Swami Ramanananda Saraswati. "If, with the decay of the physical body, the light within reverts to the all-pervading Light how can there be any transmigration or

reincarnation of the soul?"

He smilingly replied with a quotation from the Bhagavad Gita meaning: you will know in due course.

I am glad to say that after long and deep consideration I have been able to fathom this sublime theory.

In yoga *samadhi* is used to indicate some kind of trance and there are various kinds of *samadhi*. But the *samadhi* I speak to you about is different. It is *sahaja samadhi*. In this state you remain calm and composed during activity. You realize that you are moved by the deeper Real Self within and are unaffected by what you do or say or think. You have no worries, anxieties or cares, for you realize that there is nothing that belongs to you as ego and that everything is being done by something with which you are in conscious union.

—BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.

THE EVER-PRESENT

By DUNCAN GREENLEES *

"It is expedient that I leave you" — CHRIST

* * * *

"Herein is no cause for sorrow" — BUDDHA

* * *

One of the Lord Buddha's last recorded sayings was, "All compounds must dissolve; herein there is no cause for sorrow." That precious and beloved body, so long treasured in our hearts as Sri Bhagavan, was, as a physical vehicle, a compound and had to separate in time into its component elements, disappearing from those eyes which so long delighted in it with reverent affection.

So too, Sri Krishna found it expedient that His Gopi-devotees be made to enrich their love for Him by withdrawing His outward Form from their adoring eyes. Then He sent Uddhava to hint to them how they could now be *always* in His presence and find Him ever dancing in their hearts. When the eye of love has no longer to seek with yearning for the Beloved outside, the eye of the inner heart is turned within, and there realizes His living ecstatic presence.

And so it has been with us. The inevitable happened on that April evening in 1950, and the dear body which had been so long the centre, the focus of our hearts' gaze ceased to delight our eyes. Can we say that He is dead? Bhagavan dead? The word could have no meaning. How can He who lives in all the universe ever taste of death? "You think I am going away? But where am I to go? I shall remain here with you!" That was His promise while he was preparing us for the seeming separation. And those of us who loved Him here in Tiruvannamalai hold firmly to the faith, which we feel confirmed by continual experience, that He has kept that pro-

mise, and is still to be contacted here in the Ashram as of old.

Like Surdas, darkening the physical sight so that he might see clearly the Light within, He has dimmed our outer sight to His radiance, only that the inner vision might be filled with His eternal Light. He has veiled the outer Form we loved so well, that its beauty might no longer draw our gaze away from the everlasting Presence enthroned in our inmost Heart.

Painful was that veiling to our human hearts. Yet in these days of seeming deprivation, happy indeed are we if we be driven thereby inward, to see and love Him there; shining as the Heart of all, the ineffably radiant Self, manifesting ever as the Self of our self, the very Being of our being, the ever-blessed Awareness of all Truth, the Stillness of omnipresent Bliss — Satchidananda.

Our hearts were kindled to deep affection while He taught us by word and example, while He silently showered the nectar dew of Grace upon us all. Today they turn to Him

* For whom see the obituary in this issue.



within, by day and night, no less than of old ; and they rejoice to find that Grace wells up unceasingly from the Fountain of the One Self, who alone is all Wisdom, Love and Power.

At His tender feet, that trod the mountain path so long for us, our grateful love and

undying memory we lay. May He accept these poor gifts of our hearts, and pour His grace on all who wander in the darkness of the unknown tracts of primal ignorance. His Light shines, with the everlasting clarity of God's own Light.

MAHARSHI RAMANA AND SELF-ENQUIRY

By SRI-LA-SRI PANRIMALAI SWAMIGAL

Great saints like Maharshi Ramana who have attained Self-Realisation and lived in the stage of eternal supreme consciousness have disseminated spiritual knowledge amongst seekers of truth to ennoble their lives.

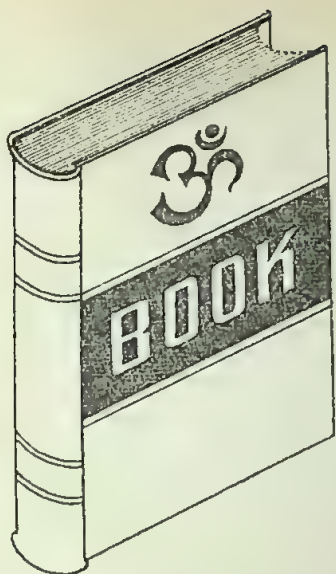
Maharshi Ramana has chosen the path of Knowledge for serving humanity. His teaching through Atma Vichara, that is, enquiry within : "Who am I ?" and tracing the mind

to its primal source as a Sadhana for Self-Realisation, has enabled many a spiritual aspirant to still the mind and realize the true Self as the self-effulgent, omnipresent Spirit. By abiding in mouna or silence, he radiated serene calmness and peace (santi) all around.

It is but befitting that the *Mountain Path* should have brought out a Special Jayanti Number to reveal to the world the greatness of Maharshi Ramana — the Sat Guru.

The individual being which identifies its existence with that of the life in the physical body as 'I' is called the ego. The Self, which is pure Consciousness, has no ego-sense about it. Neither can the physical body which is inert in itself, have this ego-sense. Between the two, that is between the Self or pure Consciousness and the inert physical body, there arises mysteriously the ego-sense or 'I' notion, the hybrid which is neither of them, and this flourishes as an individual being. This ego or individual being is at the root of all that is futile and undesirable in life. Therefore it is to be destroyed by any possible means ; then That which ever is alone remains resplendent. This is Liberation or Enlightenment or Self-Realization.

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.



REVIEWS

PATH TO BEATIFIC PEACE, VOLS. I AND II:
(Rama Sakti Mission, Mangalore, pp. 198 and 262, Rs. 2.25 and 3.50.)

The first volume of 'Path to Beatific Peace' contains a life sketch of Sri Rama Devi followed by extracts from her letters to devotees. The second volume is composed of more formal expositions.

From childhood Rama Devi used to fall into states of samadhi and ecstasy with visions of the Gods and intuitional perception of her own inner nature as the One Self or the Divine Mother. After growing up she went through twelve years of arduous sadhana before starting to guide and instruct others. This sadhana was as unobtrusive as it was severe, since she continued her work as a housewife the whole time, never shirking duties or responsibilities.

In guiding her disciples now, Mother insists on their facing life fully and converting their family and professional duties into means of sadhana. She attaches little importance to ritual. She prescribes total surrender to God or Divine Mother and at the same time recommends concentration on the great Advaitic utterances such as 'That thou art'. To the theorist these two attitudes appear contradictory but in practice they may well be combined or alternate according to the mood of the devotee.

Her guidance is towards purity through concentration, strength through surrender. "The power of a concentrated mind is immense," she writes; "When the mind is taken off from its pursuit of shadows in the outer world and directed inward it gains an insight into its own various

planes of consciousness. The inner world can be surveyed only by a mind disciplined in concentration. The weaklings have always complaints to make, but the man of strong mind and gigantic will prepares himself in silence for the great conquest." But—and here is the necessary paradox—this strength is to be combined with and attained by perfect purity and utter surrender, so that it is not the ego that is strengthened.

WITH ROBES AND BOWL, GLIMPSES OF THE THUDONG BHIKKHU LIFE: By Bhikkhu Khantipalo. (Wheel Publication, No. 83-84, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Ceylon, pp. 76, no price stated.)

It is truly admirable the way Bhikkhu Khantipalo brings out both the austerity and the beauty of the life of a Siamese bhikkhu in this little book. If he can describe a dedicated Buddhist way of life so ably he has certainly no need to traduce other religions, as he did in an earlier book reviewed in these columns.

Since Buddhism is making its impact as yet mainly on intellectuals in the West, there is inevitably a tendency among many of its new adherents to look upon it mainly as a philosophy and narrow down the Noble Eightfold Path to the single item of Right Understanding. A book like this, showing what a dedicated life is called for by understanding that really is right will be an excellent corrective to such an attitude. This does not imply, of course, that the conditions of life of a Siamese bhikkhu can be transferred to a Western country—but the spirit that gives rise to them can.

HERE LIES THE HEART, A TALE OF MY LIFE:
By Mercedes de Acosta. (Reynal, pp. 372,
\$5.75.)

A brilliant writer and a member of the exotic social set of Greta Garbo, Ivor Stravinsky, Aldous Huxley, Isadora Duncan and other such legendary figures, Mercedes de Acosta nevertheless dedicates her autobiography to "Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi the only completely egoless, world-detached and pure being I have ever known".

She came to India to visit Bhagavan in 1938 and was enormously impressed. Unfortunately, however, her account of him and of the Ashram is full of inaccuracies. Also many of the sayings she attributes to him show a faulty memory. For instance, he would never have said that a world war was imminent or told her that her destiny lay in America. He was concerned to turn the mind away from outer circumstances to the inner Essence.

Clearly apocryphal is the episode from which she derives the title of the book. "When I was in India in 1938, the great sage, Ramana Maharshi, placed his hand on my right breast and said, 'Here lies the Heart—the Dynamic, Spiritual Heart. Learn to find the Self in it.'" That was not Bhagavan's way of speaking; moreover he scrupulously avoided touching people, especially ladies, or being touched by them.

ARTHUR OSBORNE.

OPEN SECRET: By Wei Wu Wei. (Hong Kong University Press for Asia east of Burma; Oxford University Press for other countries. Pp. 194, HK Dollars 15.)

In this his fifth volume, the author, whose variations on the same theme are well known to readers of *The Mountain Path*, has surpassed himself and almost succeeded in revealing without distortion or dilution the eternal secret known to Lao-tzu, Huang Po, Shen Hui and Ramana Maharshi. While he asserts disarmingly "I am not only not an expert, but not even a student of the subject," he expounds and annotates, with reference to Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese sources, the Hridaya Sutra, which sets out to transmit transcendental knowledge and does it by teaching us "how to see correctly" and providing "an original and dynamic reaction to all scriptures, doctrines and methods."

Avoiding all metaphysical jargon, all myths and symbols and clichés of conventional religion, using contemporary language accurately yet tellingly, Wei Wu Wei presents the purest advaita in a series of swift expositions, often in the form

of a lively dialogue between himself as teacher and himself as pupil. The reader, as he watches, eager and breathless, this strenuous game of hide and seek, gets delightfully mixed up with both the roles and like Hanuman, humble and courageous by turns, crosses the ocean of nescience, despite rocks rampant and marine monsters catching flying objects *via* their shadows, and discovers at last the Goddess of Truth.

The directness of approach and the strength and resilience of the writing are illustrated by the following snippets:

All the visible universe is the Buddha.

All perceiving is the Buddha mind.

The whole mind is the impersonal mind. All judgments and problems vanish when split mind is made whole.

In deep sleep we go sane for a short respite.

Bondage is wholly the notion of "I". And Liberation is liberation from the idea of liberation.

Non-volitional living is the process of being lived.

We do not love others. We *are* others.

All objects are the perceiving of them; the perceiving of them is what they are.

That cannot be free. *This* cannot be bound.

"I" is the answer to every question.

Any old devotee in dear old India would accept the suggestion (at p. 173) that Maharshi's charming cow Lakshmi was fully 'enlightened' and was indeed a bodhisattva. But it needs a ripe scholar to justify the belief and a daring literary artist to formulate it thus (p. 172): "Any phenomenon can function prajnatically." What a horribly exotic adverb! But how functionally inevitable, having been pragmatically called up by the context to be ecstatically recognized in it by the attentive reader!

K. S.

THE GOLDEN STRING: By Bede Griffiths.
[Fontana Books (Collins), pp. 192, 3s. 6d.]

Though this autobiography of Father Griffiths can be fully appreciated only by those who are conversant with the letter and the spirit of the teaching of Christianity in its various forms — ancient and modern, as a story of an "unbeliever" finding his way, through trying vicissitudes of life, to an enlightened Faith in the Divinity at the centre of all Existence, it has a genuine ring. The writer's remarkable experience of God in Nature even during his school days, his revolt from the rule of organised religion and industrial civilisation, his experiments in simple living in the bosom of Nature, his discovery of the function

of prayer as the link between man and his Maker and his eventual admission into an order of the Catholic Church are all described with engaging candour.

There are passages in the book testifying to the author's broad interest in the philosophies and spiritual traditions of the East — Buddhist, Chinese and Indian. We are sorry to note, however, that his understanding of Hindu philosophy and his perspective of Indian history are very limited (pp. 172, 182). Vedanta is not the whole of Hindu philosophy; Shankara is not the whole of Vedanta. The thought of the Upanishads is much older than "the first millennium before Christ". His plea for the introduction of the doctrine of *sin* alongside the doctrine of illusion to make Vedanta "gain its full significance", betrays want of understanding of a very fundamental truth underlying the Vedic and Vedantic tradition, viz. man is divine at his core and can realise his divinity. There is no sin to stand between the human soul and its Parent God. There is only the veil of Ignorance.

INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE MYSTICISM: By Jacques de Marquette. (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7, pp. 228, Rs. 6.50.)

Calling for a systematic study of mysticism which he looks upon as the likely form of the coming world-religion, the author of this work first defines what mysticism is not. He draws a distinction between mysticism and spiritualism, mysticism and occultism, and mysticism and "psychism". He mentions the main characteristics of mysticism as being a certain immediacy, ineffability, effectivity as well as passivity.

Dr. de Marquette then proceeds to give a rapid survey of the landmarks in mysticism as it has developed in India, among the Buddhists, among the Greeks, the Hebrews and the Christian schools, ancient and mediaeval. There is a satisfying chapter on Islamic mysticism.

Speaking of the Sufis' classification of the several planes of existence to be traversed in their line of ascent to the Supreme, he draws pointed attention to the fact that there is not one Light but many flashes that may well mislead the seeker unless he is forewarned. He quotes Al Bistami who "tells us that after diligent practice he had access to a world of radiant light which he mistook for God and worshipped for twelve years. Then he received a greater measure of Grace, discovered that he had been worshipping the light of his soul and he turned to the Real."

There are interesting parallels drawn between the fundamental experiences of the mystics of the early Christian Church and those of Buddhist monks. Plotinus, the Gnostics, the influence of Muslim Thought on Spanish mysticism, etc. are some of the interesting topics touched upon. The style is difficult and we are afraid that will limit the appeal of the book.

THE ETERNAL LAW: By R. Krishnaswami Aiyar. (Ganesh & Co., Madras-17, pp. 172, Rs. 4.)

Though entitled *The Eternal Law*, this book does not deal with the fundamental truths that have imparted an unbroken continuity to the way of life known as Hinduism, but elaborates upon certain forms given to them by the system builders at some stage of their career. It is these forms in the several fields of experience — individual and collective — that are sought to be eternised with all their characteristic features which, whatever their justification at one time, turn out to be disabling limitations when extended unduly.

The author gives a detailed exposition of the *Sastraic* scheme of human life, its goal, the prescribed means to reach it, the human body and its several sheaths, the worlds, the statutes of the Divine — individual, universal and transcendent. The discussion points more to the past than to the present. The observations on family planning, relaxation of marriage-rules etc., are not helpful, to say the least.

It is difficult to agree with the author that "congenital untouchability can go only when the embodiment got at birth ceases to be. The embodiment is not due to mere chance but is regulated by the law of Karma." Segregation on the basis of birth is certainly not among the basic tenets of the Eternal Dharma of the Vedas, but a social phenomenon that was, perhaps, inevitable at one time during the historical development of the peoples. But it is clearly a travesty of the universal spirit of Hindu Dharma.

M. P. PANDIT.

ETHICAL PHILOSOPHIES OF INDIA: By I. C. Sharma. Revised and edited by S. M. Dargert. (Allen and Unwin, pp. 374, 42s.)

This book is an effective refutation of the charge that is constantly made by European scholars that India has no ethics worth the name and that the indifferent treatment of the subject indicated the absence of a moral standard in India. The book under review proves conclusively that it is wrong

to regard ethics as non-existing in our philosophical systems, but that on the contrary it is based on metaphysics, and thoroughly practical, well-suited to our society and motivated by the ultimate goal of mukti. The book is very comprehensive and stretches from the Vedic period down to modern times. The ethics of each age is carefully expounded and the treatment of the subject is clear and correct. The author in the course of the exposition exposes several fallacies in the popular and prevailing accounts of Indian philosophy. He justifiably complains that students of Indian philosophy usually ignore the Brahmana literature and that without an adequate knowledge of this branch they are not able to understand the unity pervading the hymns and the Upanishads and mistakenly think that the latter represent a revolt against the ritualistic cult of the Brahmanas.

Beginning with the historical background of Indian ethics, Dr. Sharma proceeds to discuss the ethics of the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Carvaka system, the Jaina and the Bauddha systems. He then takes up the orthodox systems and his review of the Mimamsa ethics particularly is very illuminating. He explodes the familiar notion that jnana and karma are mutually antagonistic and that Mimamsa and Vedanta also are so. He points out that Sankara did not oppose morality and ritual on the lower, empirical level.

After dealing with the ethics of the Gita, the author takes up for consideration contemporary ethics as taught by Tagore, Radhakrishnan, Gandhi and Nehru. The concluding chapter discusses current questions like the relation between capitalism and communism, the ethical implications of communism and so on. The book is substantially informative and is very learned and where it differs from the conventional views, it is always for right reasons. This is a volume which every student of Indian philosophy should make it a point to study.

S. RAJAGOPALA SASTRI.

TOWARD ENLIGHTENED LIFE: By Swami P. Parampanthi. (Published by the author, Viraj, Dibrugarh, Assam, pp. xiii and 205, Rs. 5.)

'Enlightened' in the title implies activation by Spirit. The plan of the book makes this clear. The first part of it consists of four chapters on the teachings of Jesus, Zen, Vedanta and J. Krishnamurti. The second and larger part of the book provides guidance in consolidating spiritual insight and applying it to practical life. The chapters are on meditation, creative living, dealing effectively with problems, etc.

The author's earnestness, the range of his reading and the delicacy of his perceptiveness are evident. He derives aid from many sources, e.g. Eckhart and Kierkegaard. His earlier writings ranged over modern physics, psychology, natural science, etc. in their relationship to religion. All this is symptomatic of the temper in which the return to religion is being made in the modern age—not in the simple joy of a home-coming but with a defiant display of evidence in support of one's lawful claim to one's own house.

The second part of the book, the section on 'creative living', is the most useful; but all sections contain helpful suggestions. Nevertheless the author's love of exhaustiveness (firstly, secondly, etc.) may prove exhausting to the reader. And fluent writing by himself with the sayings of the sages to illuminate only the turnings in the passages would have been preferable to the method of the scrap-book.

RELIGION AND MAN. (Orient Longmans, pp. 40, Rs. 3.)

ATMAN AND BRAHMAN in Vedic Religion. (Bhavan's Book University, pp. 54, Re. 1.)

Both by H. H. Jaya Chamaraja Wadiar.

In November 1961 His Highness delivered the two lectures that constitute the first book as the Ranade Lectures of Karnatak University; and in December of the same year the three lectures that form the second book as the Munshi Foundation Lectures at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in Bombay. All five lectures are expositions of the Sanatana Dharma in its pristine form, known as Vedanta: the contents of the Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita, particularly as interpreted by the great Shankaracharya and known as Advaita. The Sringeri Shankaracharya bears witness to the authenticity of the interpretations set forth in the first book in his Foreword to it. Sri C. Rajagopalachariar has contributed a similar Foreword to the second book, testifying to the author's scholarship and commending the lucidity of his exposition.

Advaita, whether as experience or dogma, is difficult to communicate. As experience it is said to be experience with no experiencer. As dogma it affirms a unitive state of consciousness within which the frontiers of the intellect's ideas cannot be convincingly delimited. All that the author can do, therefore, is to set forth the relationship between the terms or thoughts which are commonly employed in expounding Advaita. 'Vedic

thought', 'the concept of Rita', 'the doctrine of Brahman' are all phrases redolent of the lecture hall, where Vedanta is dealt with as a landmark in 'Indian culture' rather than as a power that transforms life. But this is hard to avoid.

PROF. K. SUBRAHMANYAM.

THE CREST JEWEL OF WISDOM: Trans. by Charles Johnston. (J. M. Watkins, pp. 104, 12s. 6d.)

This is an English translation of Vivekachudamani, usually attributed to Shankaracharya the Prince of Advaita philosophy, although some scholars dispute his authorship. In any case the value of the book as a lucid exposition of the basic principles of Advaita cannot be minimised.

The translation is faithful and at the same time in fine English. The translator is to be congratulated.

DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA.

GURUVANI

The first issue of the annual *Guruvani*, reviewed by us in October 1964, was excellent; the

second is better. Well edited, well written, well got up, it sets a standard hard to emulate. The article by the editor herself, Pratibha Trivedi, on 'Kundalini Yoga' is a really masterly bit of work. Admirable too is M. P. Pandit's exposition of the need for a Guru.

The annual consists largely of reminiscences by devotees of Swami Muktananda, explaining how, by the power of Shaktipada, he awakens the dormant Kundalini in a disciple and thereafter watches and guides its development.

✓ THE BIHAR SCHOOL OF YOGA

The Bihar School of Yoga, Monghyr, Bihar, N. India has brought out a handsome commemoration volume on the occasion of its second annual international yoga convention. This contains felicitations from a very wide range of sympathisers, both Indian and foreign. A long essay entitled 'Mechanics of Meditation' mentions various aspects of yoga and gives practical hints on kriya, japa and dhyana. The efficacy of japa is stressed and its different forms are discussed. The portion dealing with ajapa japa as a means to samadhi may prove helpful to many.

NOTICE

Sometimes we receive complaints of non-receipt of the journal rather late. Copies are posted to subscribers in the first week of January, April, July and October every year and should reach our subscribers in India by the second week at the latest.

We request readers to notify us of non-receipt before the end of the month of publication in the case of readers in India and within three months in the case of readers overseas. *Delayed complaints of non-receipt will not be attended to.*

Sometimes readers do not notify us of change of address in time and subsequently complain of non-receipt. We request readers to notify us of change of address so as to reach us one week ahead of the month of despatch. Otherwise we cannot be responsible for loss in transit.

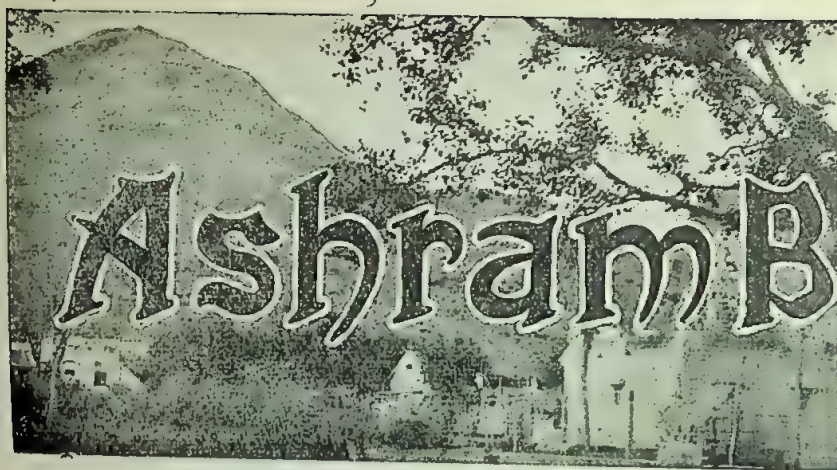
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Receipts for subscriptions are sent only with the journal and not separately.

Subscribers whose subscriptions end with the current issue for January 1966 are requested to renew their subscriptions at an early date.

V. GANESAN
Managing Editor

January 1, 1966



Ashram Bulletin

SWAMI MUKTANANDA

Swami Muktananda is regarded by his followers as the successor of Swami Nityananda, about whom there was an article in our issue of April 1965. There is an article by him in our present issue describing a visit here during Bhagavan's lifetime. In December he paid us a visit accompanied by a few of his followers, including Smt. Pratibha Trivedi, the 'Mother' of his ashram.



Sri Swami Muktananda (CENTRE), with Sri T. N. Venkataraman and Sri Arthur Osborne

People were attracted by his genial, friendly manner and ready accessibility. He is said to concern himself with the actual training of disciples by kundalini-marga rather than with theoretical expositions, and certainly people here showed no disposition to ask him doctrinal questions.

A LONDON BRANCH

The attention of London readers is drawn to the letter of N. Vasudevan about a branch being established in London. May the blessing of Sri Bhagavan be on it and may it long flourish.

RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

(Registered under Act XXI of 1860)

Objects

The objects of the Kendra are :

- (1) To bring together the devotees of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and other persons interested in the study and pursuit of spiritual values through *jnana marga*, or the way of knowledge;
- (2) To provide an educational centre, open to men and women of all races and religions, where the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi will be studied and disseminated and the techniques of self-enquiry will be practised and developed;
- (3) To organize classes for the study and discussion of religious and philosophical works;
- (4) To organize meetings for discourses, celebrations, bhajans, parayana, worship, meditation, etc.;
- (5) To maintain a library and reading room;
- (6) To arrange for the editing, printing, publication, sale and distribution of books, pamphlets, periodicals, pictures, etc., concerning the life and teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and on religion, metaphysics, ethics, psychology, culture and related subjects;
- (7) To maintain close and continuous contact with Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, and to help in its efforts and activities;
- (8) To do all other acts in furtherance of the above aims and objects.

Membership

Any person who declares his faith or interest in Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi or his teachings may be admitted as a member of the Kendra.

Governing Body

The Governing Body of the Kendra shall consist of nine members, besides the President, not

more than three Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer and not more than two Secretaries.

Middle Way', the organ of the London Buddhist Society.

* * *
May Bhagavan's Grace be on this Kendra and prosper it.

VISITORS

MOUNTAIN PATH NEWS

We were pleasantly surprised to find the following very generous appreciation of our April 1965 issue in *The Middle Way*, the organ of 'The London Buddhist Society', signed by the President of the Society himself:

The Mountain Path, April 1965.

This venture of Mr. Arthur Osborne, to whom we are indebted for two invaluable books on the life and teachings of the late Ramana Maharshi, is clearly an immediate success, and becomes, if neither is insulted by the comparison, the Hindu equivalent in India of the Maha Bodhi Journal. At ten shillings a year for four issues its 70 pages makes us jealous, if such were possible to a Buddhist, but we are at least capable of appreciation and congratulation. In this issue are several notable articles, including three which tell us a great deal about the vexed subject of Tantra, Hindu and Buddhist. Mr. Osborne's Editorial, "Self-Knowledge", is quite admirable, while the Lama Anagarika Govinda's "Principles of Buddhist Tantrism" insists, to our still mild surprise, that Buddhist Tantra existed long before the Hindu version which entered Tibet from Bengal in the 8th century. At least the basic distinction between them is here made clear. Other articles, by H.H. the Dalai Lama on Concentration, on Hermetic Symbolism, and on "This"—and all That" by Wei Wu Wei, are well worth study, and we welcome an entirely new translation of the Bhagavad Gita by Professor Kulkarni and the Editor.

T.C.H.

In view, however, of the purely Buddhist fare offered by the Maha Bodhi Journal and the widely varied menu of *The Mountain Path*, including Christian, Buddhist, Islamic and other items, the term 'Hindu equivalent' seems hardly apt. Perhaps in a deeper sense, however, it is apt, since what Westerners call 'Hinduism' is the Sanatana Dharma, the 'Eternal Harmony', and must therefore be genuinely catholic and universal, encouraging all true spiritual currents.

'SPONTANEOUS AWAKENING'

Readers who appreciated the story of Helen in the article 'Spontaneous Awakening' in our October issue will be interested to hear that another, though very different, case of spontaneous awakening, this time of a lady from New Zealand, is reported under the title 'The Experience of Turning About' in the August issue of 'The

Mr. and Mrs. Stack came on a first visit here as friends of Miss Merston. Soon afterwards they came on a second visit as guests of the Ashram. Mr. Stack, who is general manager of Dunlop Rubber in India, writes: "I can assure you that both my wife and I enjoyed and benefited from our last visit to the Ashram and we hope it will not be long before we will be able to return."

* * *
Dr. Bowen, professor of physics at Johannesburg University, has been here twice before. We were much pleased that this time Mrs. Bowen



Dr. and Mrs. Bowen

came with him. Many readers have come to *The Mountain Path* through Joel Goldsmith and his followers; this time we were interested to see the movement going the opposite way: it was through *The Mountain Path* that Mrs. Bowen discovered Joel Goldsmith and contacted a group of his followers in South Africa. We send them our best wishes.

* * *
Zofia de Mello, German by birth but an Indian citizen by marriage, felt before ever coming here that Arunachala is her spiritual home and Bhagavan her Guru, and her stay here has only confirmed the feeling.

Years ago, before she ever left Germany, she had a vision of a frail human figure composed of pure light meeting her



Zofia de Mello

face to face. In place of his countenance was an effulgence not of this world, and when she drew near to him she was herself absorbed into the same luminosity. She recognizes now that it was Bhagavan.

On another occasion scenes from her past lives swept before her like a cinema reel—different forms, speaking different languages, once this, once that, once a boy playing in the street, once an old merchant in a cloth shop in some Islamic land turning to God as death approached, but always her. In the last picture on the reel she saw herself with her present features standing on the very summit of a hill with the pure air and sky all around her. And on her first visit to Arunachala she recognized the hill.

Once when she was in India her father back in Germany fell seriously ill and her mother, afflicted by distress, began to worry about her too. Suddenly an elderly man leaning on a stick appeared to the mother. She was frightened at first and then felt the kindness, the grace, the protection of him, until at last she, an elderly German woman who had never even conceived of God in human form, had the astounding thought: "This man is God!" When visiting Zofia here later she saw a picture of Bhagavan and recognized that it was he.

* * *

Mrs. Veera Hedenlo, a Swedish lady who has been staying at the Ashram for some weeks already and wishes to stay for a few months longer, feels quite happy and at home here and tells us the following story about her coming:

About 10 years ago I came in touch with a guru who initiated me into the line of devotion to Sri Krishna. He belonged to the Chaitanya school of Bengal. After I had served him for five years he gave me his last teaching and turned me away. As I felt no difference between Guru and God I suffered much from the feeling of separation.

Then Paul Brunton's book 'A Search in Secret India' came in my hand and after that I began my seeking for another teacher. At this time I did not yet feel any attraction to Sri Bhagavan so the Mother at Sri Aurobindo Ashram became most important to me. Through correspondence I was in touch with Her for about three years and she slowly revived me from my sad condition.

During my sadhana I was living in a never-ceasing flow of dreams and experiences and when this in time came to an end I fell into distress, thinking that I had lost the Grace.

Then the little collection of Bhagavan's sayings called: 'Erase the Ego', came in my hand and the moment I opened it the answer shone clear before my eyes on page 3: "The highest

form of grace is Silence. It is also the highest spiritual instruction. All other modes of instruction are derivations from silence and are therefore secondary. Silence is the primary form. If the Guru is silent the seeker's mind gets purified by itself. Mouna is the utmost eloquence. Peace is the utmost activity. How? Because the person remains in his essential nature and so permeates all the recesses of the Self. Thus he can call up any power into play whenever it is necessary. That is the highest Siddhi."

At the same time I had an experience of the presence of Bhagavan. He remained with me for three days and after that I knew that a new step had been taken in my sadhana.

Some months later I came to know about Arunachala and *The Mountain Path*. I felt the attraction of the Hill and the Mother said I should go to Sri Ramanasramam.

When I began my sadhana on the Hill I first tried to walk barefoot as it is said one should. In a short time I found it impossible and one day sitting on a rock I said to the Hill—I am in love with you—but you are too hard for my feet—what am I now to do?

The Hill smiled, as though to say: "Better wear your shoes and go thinking of My Feet than you go barefoot thinking of your own." From then on I began wearing my shoes while on the Hill and spent several weeks going to different parts of it.

One happy morning, when I was going from Skandashram, where I used to go, suddenly both my shoes were broken. I was surprised because I had used them for not long a time. I put them in my bag and proceeded barefoot.

After a while I felt the Hill say: "Today you have completed union with me; feel, there is nothing more parting us." At the same time I felt the oneness with the stones and the power radiating from the Hill during my barefoot travel and slowly I returned to the Ashram very happy.

* * *

We have also received one of our rare but always welcome visits from Prof. K. Subrahmanyam, a staunch friend both of the Ashram and *The Mountain Path*. Our readers will remember him for his articles 'Beyond Psychology' in July 1964 and 'Transcendence of Karma' in Jan. 1965. A simple, friendly and unassuming person, Sri Subrahmanyam is a retired professor not of philosophy but English and expresses his profound understanding in a style free from the academic terminology of professional philosophy.



Mrs. Veera Hedenlo

THE BOOKSTALL

To fill the gap left by A. Sivarama Reddiar (whose obituary was published in our previous issue) we have been fortunate in securing the services of S. L. Narasiah, A Telugu Brahmin, he came here with his family and had darshan of Bhagavan as early as 1935. After that, however, he was posted to various parts of India on government service. He served abroad also for some years, in Tokyo, Washington and New York.

He retired in 1961 and has since then been travelling about India looking for a suitable place to settle down. On arriving at Sri Ramanasramam, he decided that he would like to stay here and that the bookstall management, just vacant, would provide him with congenial occupation. His courtesy to all comers well fits him for the work, as also does his wide linguistic range. He speaks English and a number of Indian languages, including the three most necessary here: Tamil, Telugu and Hindi, and knows Sanskrit.

FAREWELL

A. Devaraja Mudaliar has been a frequent visitor to Bhagavan from as far back as 1900, as he himself tells us in his book 'My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana'. After retiring from his practice of the law he became a permanent resident here. As explained in our editorial of Jan. 1965, people were not usually encouraged to settle down here in those days; however exceptions were made in some special cases, Major Chadwick (for whom see our Ashram Bulletin of Jan. 1964) and Devaraja Mudaliar both being allowed to build cottages for themselves on the Ashram premises.



Devaraja Mudaliar

given to them. This has now been published in two volumes under the title 'Day by Day with Bhagavan'.

Devaraja is a man with a keen, alert mind and a ready will and was often called upon by Bhagavan to translate his replies to foreigners. He had a strong feeling for accuracy, due perhaps to his legal training, and this stood him in good stead in compiling a record of visitors to the Ashram over a certain period and of the explanations

While some persons scarcely dared speak to Bhagavan, Devaraja was one of those who used to sit near his couch and talk freely with him. This did not imply any lack of respect. Indeed (as appears from his article 'The Maharshi and the Path of Devotion' in our issue of Oct. 1964) Bhagavan was God to him and his devotion was as simple and complete as a child's. He often referred to himself as Bhagavan's child.

During Bhagavan's lifetime he often used to sing Tamil spiritual and devotional songs in his presence. Since that time he has continued this daily practice, like Ramaswami Pillai, to whom we are introducing readers in this issue.

Although still upright and alert, Devaraja is now beginning to feel his 80 years. In addition, his eyesight is failing badly. He therefore finds it too much of a strain to stay alone in his room here and has gone to live with his daughter. His address will be: 66 Nellukara St., Kancheepuram, about a hundred miles away.

Visitors to the Ashram will miss his genial and friendly personality and the enormous fund of anecdotes about Bhagavan which he had at his command. The Ashram also will miss a staunch and experienced devotee from the earliest days. May the Grace of Bhagavan be with him and prolong his life and health in his new environment.

POSTAL DISSERVICE

We are sorry to have to announce that, without consulting the Ashram or *The Mountain Path* or the residents here, the postal authorities have closed down our Ashram postal delivery service. Letters can still be sent out from the Ashram but for delivery we are dependent on the general post office in town. Our editor's letter of protest has not even been answered.

OBITUARY

Dr. Evans-Wentz

Although not specifically attached to this Ashram, Dr. Evans-Wentz was at one time a well known figure here. A profound student of Tibetan Buddhism, he made himself widely known by his translations of 'The Tibetan Book of the Dead' and the 'Life of Milarepa'. After leaving Tibet he came here to learn from Bhagavan and a number of his questions and Bhagavan's replies to them, especially on the subject of sadhana for Westerners, are to be found in 'Talks with Ramana Maharshi'.

We learn that he passed away in California, where he was living in retirement, on 17th July this year.

* * * *

Duncan Greenless

Another friend of the Ashram and occasional visitor here who died recently was Duncan Greenless. A colourful figure and a prolific writer, he was primarily attached to the Theosophical Society, but he revered Bhagavan and came here from time to time both in Bhagavan's lifetime and after. He was one of the contributors to the Golden Jubilee Souvenir published in 1946 on the 50th anniversary of Bhagavan's coming to Tiruvannamalai.

Some of his questions also are reported in the 'Talks'. For instance, he said once: "After leaving the Ashram in October I was aware of Bhagavan's peace enfolding me for about ten days. All the time while busy with work there was an undercurrent of that peace of unity. . . . Then it faded out entirely and the old stupidities came in instead."

To which Bhagavan replied: "It will become constant when the mind is strengthened. Repeated practice strengthens the mind, and such a mind is capable of holding on to the current. In that case, engagement in work or no engagement, the current remains unaffected and is not interrupted."

* * * *

Swami Madhavananda

Although not particularly connected with this Ashram, a great loss to the spiritual cause in general is the passing of Sri Swami Madhavananda, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, who died on October 6th in Calcutta at the age of 78 after a long illness. He joined the Math in 1910 and became successively the editor of 'Udbodhan', President of Advaita Ashram, Mayavati, General Secretary of the Mission and, in 1962, its President as well.

He was well loved for his saintly character, stern integrity and genial temperament and admired for his vast learning. This is evidenced by his monumental work of translation of the commentary of Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada on the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad as well as other valuable works both in English and Hindi.

We condole sincerely with the Ramakrishna Mission over the great loss they have sustained.

* * * *

Sri Krishna Prem

Yet another loved and esteemed figure whose passing we deplore is Sri Krishna Prem. An Englishman in his purvashrama, he has long been known as a devotional worshipper of Sri Krishna in his Ashram at Mirtola. He came here once in the lifetime of Bhagavan, for whom he had the most profound reverence. In April 1964 we published a letter of his felicitating the infant *Mountain Path* and wishing it well. He died on Nov. 13th and will long be remembered and regretted.

* * * *

BOUND VOLUMES

Bound volumes of the 1965 issues are available. They are priced Rs. 6.50. Foreign 14s., \$2.00, postage included.

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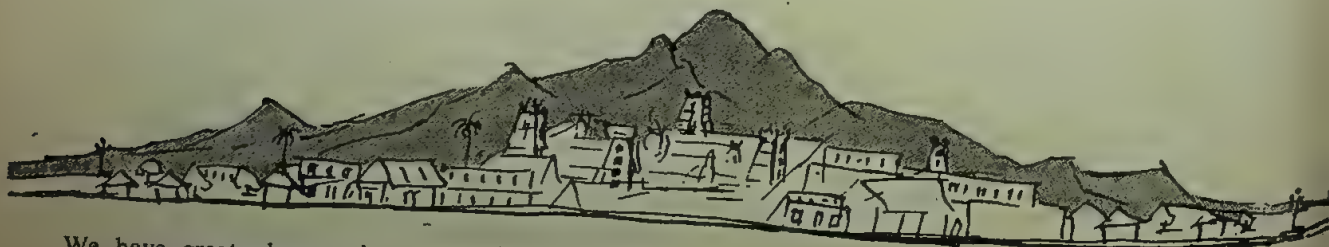
BACK NUMBERS

Copies of the issues for January, April and July 1964 are still available (those of January and April had to be reprinted because the circulation shot up far above what was anticipated). Only October 1964 is out of print.

* * * *

FORTHCOMING ISSUES

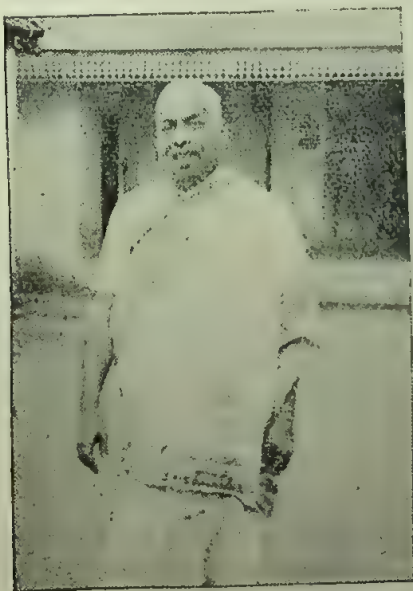
Our next issue will be mainly concerned with PRAYERS AND POWERS; that of July with REINCARNATION.



We have great pleasure in reproducing the picture of Arunachala drawn by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi Himself. Our grateful thanks to Sri Kunjuswami who has kindly lent it for publication.

INTRODUCING...

Krishna Bhikshu (and the 'Bhikshu' is a technical appellation not implying monk or mendicant like its Buddhist equivalent) is well known to our readers as author of the important articles 'A Chakra at Sri Ramanasramam' (April 1965) and 'Above Orthodoxy and Unorthodoxy' (October 1965), both showing a wealth of reminiscence about Bhagavan and familiarity with aspects of his teaching not often publicised. He is a man of insatiable curiosity, keen intellect and a variety of interests, one hard to get the better of in conversation, and indeed apt to give a headache to the other party. He was born in 1904 in an unorthodox and reformist family and grew up not merely a non-believer but an active disbeliever in Hinduism. A precocious youth, he read all that was available on the Brahmo Samaj and began to wonder whether what was written against Hindu tradition was not true. He read widely and began to study philosophy but acquired a distaste for religious literature. He took an interest in history also, became proficient in Telugu literature and began to study law for a profession.



Krishna Bhikshu

The great change in his life came in 1927, at the age of 23, when he was studying law in Madras and met Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni, the outstanding Tantric devotee of Bhagavan about whom there is an article in our issue of April



1965. Powerfully influenced by him, he turned to sadhana, using japa or incantation, as he did. He came to Tiruvannamalai with Ganapathi (Nayana, as he was called) and a few years later Bhagavan indicated to him the proper lakshya (spiritual aim) for his sadhana. His restless mind drove him to visit other Swamis also. He frequently went to Sri Aurobindo for darshan. He visited Sri Yogesh Babu of Benares to get an insight into psychology and Sri Kamakoti and others to acquire a thorough knowledge of Hindu orthodoxy and its justification. Influenced by a remark of Swami Siddheswarananda of the Ramakrishna Mission (later to be for many years its representative in France) that he should seek rather to express than to repress his intellectual propensities, he became a poet, dramatist, actor and astrologer, giving little thought to his practice of law. For a while he followed the raja yoga taught by Sri Ram Lal Mahaprabhu of Amritsar. Having heard an exposition of the Brahma Sutras and Bhagavata by Sri Mandalika Venkata Sastri, a famous Pandit of Yellur to whom the Kanchi Shankaracharya gave the title of 'Sastrarathnakara', he decided to learn Sanskrit and read the scriptures for himself. At this time also Sri Medavarapu Sastri of Kurnool initiated him into Advaitic sadhana. His mode of spiritual practice was confirmed in 1939 when Bhagavan authorised him to continue pranayama and pranava japa.

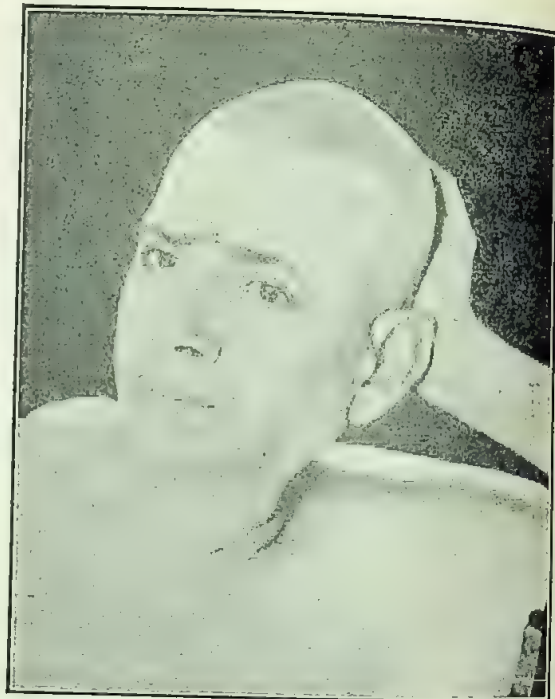
As a result of his wide study and long practice, Krishna Bhikshu became convinced of the truth and value of Hindu tradition and is now always prepared to defend it when attacked. Despite his wandering from guru to guru and his sampling of various studies, he became convinced that

Bhagavan was safeguarding and controlling him throughout and that the feet of Bhagavan were his sole shelter. He was a frequent resident at the Ashram but only settled down here permanently after Bhagavan had left the body. He expects to spend the rest of his life here.

Krishna Bhikshu is the author of 'Sri Ramana Leela' a lucid and informative biography of Bhagavan in Telugu. He has also written a commentary, not yet published, on the 'Arunachala Pancharatna'. He has translated the 'Tripura Rahasya' into Telugu and written a number of Telugu poems and dramas. On the behest of the woman saint of Jillallamodi Ammagaru, he translated Valmiki's *Ramayana* into Telugu prose. Now he is concentrating on japa, the form of sadhana with which he has most affinity.

* * * *

Ramaswami Pillai is one of the seniormost devotees still living here. He used to visit Bhagavan right back in the Skandashram days and became a permanent resident of the Ashram in 1922, the year when the present Ashram at the foot of the hill was founded. He was a college educated young man with a robust body and genial disposition and was from the start noticeable for the zest with which he tackled the many kinds of manual labour that were necessary for building up an ashram. Years later, when the present buildings had been erected and labourers were employed, he was the person in charge of Ashram labour and never minded lending a hand



himself when anything had to be done. He was an asset to the Ashram Office in many ways, being always ready to go into town to make purchases or do whatever needed to be done.

In the later years, when Bhagavan's knees were badly swollen with rheumatism and Ramaswami Pillai himself was already well advanced into middle age, Bhagavan slipped and fell one day in his daily walk on the hill, injuring his foot. Without a word to any one, Ramaswami Pillai set out next day to make a path up the hill, shoring up the steep slope into steps, chiselling steps in the slabs of rock, putting a firm stone edge to the path. From dawn to dusk he worked, single handed, for weeks together, until the path was made. Little is done to keep it in repair now that Bhagavan is no longer here in the body to walk on it, but after all the years of monsoon rain beating down on it the path still remains, so thoroughly did Ramaswami Pillai do his work.

He was a member of the Ashram Committee, which was set up to assist the management after the Mahasamadhi of Sri Bhagavan, till its dissolution in January, 1964.

Another outstanding feature about him is his love of spiritual songs. He has a stentorian voice and a vast repertoire and every day, morning and evening, he still joins with a few like-minded devotees in a session of devotional singing (*Tamil Parayana*) initiated by Bhagavan himself, consisting of hymns composed by various poet-saints of the Tamil land, including Bhagavan.



Ramaswami Pillai



Letters TO THE EDITOR

A few weeks ago, just before waking, I saw in profile the lifesize head of a man whose skin was very dark. He was beardless and about forty-five to fifty. I felt that so great was the spiritual power of this being that if he turned and looked into my eyes I might not be able to sustain my own being. At that moment, as he started to turn, a tremendous light broke forth of dazzling and blinding strength which utterly obliterated his head and filled the space in all directions. I awoke profoundly moved but without any idea as to who this great Soul might be.

Today I received the July 1965 issue of *The Mountain Path* and in the photo on page 155 I recognized the Man. It was Sri Maharshi, not as he is pictured in the frontispiece of your magazine or in benign old age but with that strange intensity of my dream.

CORNELIA BAGAROTTI,
New York.

* * * * *

The back cover of the book 'Erase the Ego' reads:

"Venkataramana was a lad in his teens in Madurai in South India. Urged by an inner call, the boy played the truant, slipped away from home and soon found himself in the solitary caves of the Arunachala Hills. There he forgot the world and, insensible to hunger and thirst and reckless of the ravages which crawling creatures wrought on his body, he immersed himself in concentrated meditation.

After a number of years of this phenomenal tapas, incredibly unrelieved by any break whatsoever, he emerged with the realization of the Supreme Reality and of the identity of his Self with it. Liberated by that realization from the chains of finitude, he became a Jivanmukta."

A few days back I completed your 'Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge', Jaico edition, 2nd impression, wherein at page 17 you have stated that Bhagavan had 'Awakening'

"with no quest, no striving, no conscious preparation" and at page 24 you have stated "Sri Bhagavan was already in constant, unbroken awareness of the Self and he has said explicitly that there was no more sadhana, no more spiritual effort after this."

I believe the back cover of 'Erase the Ego' is inaccurate and needs correction.

V. B. GANATRA,
Bombay.

The statement on the back cover of 'Erase the Ego' is incorrect and misleading. I am grateful to you for pointing it out. The publisher has been informed and has agreed to change it in the next edition.

Editor.

* * * * *

The review of 'Theurgy' in *The Mountain Path* of July 1965 (pp. 197-8) mentions a quotation attributed by the author to Bhagavan, i.e. "Realization is nothing but seeing God literally." This remark does in fact appear on p. 20 of 'Glimpses of the Life and Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi' by F. Humphreys. Presumably, in view of Bhagavan's usual remarks on Realization, this particular comment was originated by Frank Humphreys. I wonder if you would be kind enough to comment on this, please, as the book as a whole seems to indicate that Frank Humphreys was deeply influenced by Bhagavan.

P. T. MURRAY,
Scarborough.

Frank Humphreys spoke with Bhagavan a few times and was deeply influenced by him, though not deeply enough to settle at Tiruvannamalai or continue to follow Bhagavan and pay visits to Tiruvannamalai when occasion offered, as a number of other Western devotees did. It is quite clear from the sentence quoted that he had not

fully understood Bhagavan's teaching. Bhagavan's instruction, in accordance with the orthodox Hindu tradition of Advaita, was to transcend the 'three' of seer-sight-seen and attain to Oneness. He never represented Realization as 'seeing God'. His attitude when people asked him to enable them to see God was that reported by H. W. L. Poonja on p. 156 of the July 1965 issue of *The Mountain Path*: "I can enable you rather to be God than to see God." He never departed from the truth of Advaita or directed attention to a God who could be seen. In v. 8 of the 'Forty Verses' Bhagavan definitely states: "That alone is true realization wherein one knows oneself in relation to that Reality, attains peace and realizes one's identity with It." A writer like Mouni Sadhu who claims to expound Bhagavan's teaching should understand this.

Editor.

* * * *

I often think that Muruganar is the Nightingale of the Silent One, whose poetic imagery, which springs from divine at-one-ment, stirs the heart of man with celestial song. Kindly convey to Sri Muruganar our sincere love-garland which mocks time and distance to settle about his holy feet.

GLADYS DE MEUTER,
Johannesburg.

* * * *

I was sorry to see an article of the type of 'Spontaneous Awakening' by D. E. Harding published in the October issue of *The Mountain Path*, a journal which, in my opinion, has achieved a very high standard.

While 'Helen' may well be in some spontaneously awakened psychic state, to assert or imply that this is necessarily a state of a high degree, or any degree of spiritual illumination brought on by sitting "wide awake with an empty mind" and that she has therefore become "a most gifted mystic" is to make statements which are purely and solely the author's personal opinion!

He informs us that he guided her reading, knew what characteristics would finally pertain to her "virtually permanent state", so that in fact he acted as a sort of unobtrusive guru! Who are Mr. Harding and 'Helen' that they can describe such a state where the greatest spiritual masters have declined to do so?

The description given, if it means anything at all, is somewhat reminiscent of the account of prolonged psychic states of bliss experienced by

Echammal, an early woman devotee of Bhagavan. In this he abruptly terminated the devotee's experiences!

PROF. L. O. BOWEN,
Johannesburg.

As I said in my editorial of July this year, it is possible to have pre-glimpses of Realization. These are, indeed, less uncommon than might be supposed. That described by D. E. Harding in his little book 'On Having No Head' (reviewed in our issue of April 1964) bears the hallmark of authenticity and sufficiently justifies him in acting as a theoretical guide to some one struggling in the throes of spontaneous awakening.

The experiences described by Helen are undoubtedly spiritual. Psychic experiences are always in the realm of duality—you and the visions you see; Helen's state is unitive—"joy, oneness, clarity" and "just brightness, no-thinking."

You speak as though there were something reprehensible about trying to describe mystic states and experiences, but many mystics do—St. Teresa is a good example.

Editor.

* * * *

Congratulations on 'Spontaneous Awakening'. Helen's experiences are so obviously genuine. It is indeed heart-warming to read of such a manifestation of Grace.

I must also congratulate you on a most skilful piece of editing—first printing Robert Linssen's article on the theory of no-thinking and then following it up with the article describing Helen's practice of it.

MICHAEL WESTON,
London.

* * * *

Congratulations. I have been wondering how long you could keep up the standard, but I must say that the latest number (October) is the best yet. I particularly appreciate the article about Helen—so transparently spiritual, such a sign of Grace.

And I never cease wondering at the poetry you publish—Derek Southall, A. Rao, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya and yourself—this is not the usual magazine verse one reads but poetry of a high order. Why is it not known to the literary journals?

JAMES LEE,
London.

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya has long held a seat in the hall of fame. Personally I consider him the best English poet India has produced. The others are to the best of my knowledge unknown.

Editor.

I am particularly impressed by the two articles 'Starting the Contemplative Life' (July 1965) and 'The Contemplative Way of Life' (Oct. 1965), both by Joel Goldsmith. From the article by I. G. Schultz in July 1965 I see that this great mystic is no longer alive but I am anxious to know more about him and his 'Infinite Way'. Are there any 'Infinite Way' groups in India, particularly in Bangalore? And are his books available in India? And what is the address of Mrs. Schultz, so that I can write to her for further particulars.

DR. R. S. PADAKI,
Bangalore.

Joel Goldsmith has written over a dozen books, one of them entitled 'The Infinite Way'. They are published in London by Messrs. Allen & Unwin and can be ordered through any bookshop. For news of 'Infinite Way' groups it might be best to write to his widow, Mrs. Emma A. Goldsmith, 465 Dune Circle, Kailua, Hawaii. The address of Mrs. I. G. Schultz is: 239 Flensburg, Friedrichshoeh 8, West Germany.

Editor.

Ever since *The Mountain Path* brought me up against the reality of Bhagavan and his guidance I have felt ill-at-ease with the brittle ritualism formerly held necessary; and your October editorial, marshalling the evidence of all recent Hindu saints and sages, has finally convinced me to shed the fetters. I do so with immense relief and with enormous gratitude to you and to Sri Ramana.

HUGH DIXON,
London.

Whilst bigoted men of diverse religions disagree over the means of combining, spiritual men and women unite through *The Mountain Path*.

RONALD HODGES,
Nairobi, Kenya.

It has been a very pleasant surprise to see the extraordinarily high quality of the articles appearing in your fine magazine and once more I have to express my heartiest thanks to my excellent

friend Prof. Rafael Lozada for having put me in touch with such a fine source of spiritual wisdom and enlightenment.

FERMIN VALE-AMESTI,
Venezuela.

Your July edition provided me with enough nuggets of wisdom to last a lifetime. May you long continue to provide so much joy and inspiration to so many people in the four corners of the earth.

DEREK SOUTHALL,
Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire.

The Mountain is difficult to traverse but the compassionate Ramana has laid out a Path on it for us to reach the summit of living, which is Being. But, engrossed as we are in mundane pursuits, it is even beyond many of us to feel like taking to the Path. Ramana of infinite Grace should himself turn our minds toward the Path, for he is not only the Path and the Goal but also the Guide. *The Mountain Path* is certainly his instrument, and I pray that it may grow from strength to strength, bringing solace to many a suffering soul.

R. GANAPATHI,
'Kalki', Madras.

Recently I was in a frame of mind akin to doubt and despair, leading to extreme irritability. To resolve this doubt I went through all relevant articles in previous issues of *The Mountain Path* and did find an answer to the problem vexing me. But nevertheless it was an intellectual understanding and could not somehow mitigate the unhappy feeling. What finally did cure me of the ailment was Ramana Guru himself, whose assurance, felt in the heart, of continued grace and guidance dispelled all doubts and cleared the atmosphere of gloom and depression for me.

What I wish to say is that your journal certainly has Bhagavan's grace, for he guided me to just those articles which would solve my problem. It was really amazing how I pored over those articles in the hope of discovering some light on the problem troubling my mind and then, just before retiring to bed, as I looked at Bhagavan's picture while still ruminating over all I had read, the Master set all doubts at rest by an assurance in the heart.

NARGISH DUBASH,
Bombay.

May I congratulate you on the very good work that you are doing? I look forward to getting your esteemed journal every quarter.

C. R. PATTABHI RAMAN,
Deputy Union Minister of
Information and Broadcasting.

We consider Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi as our Guru, like Bhagavan Sri Nityananda. Therefore His Ashram is our Ashram and His devotees are our Gurubandhoos.

SWAMI MUKTANANDA and
PRATIBHA TRIVEDI (Amma).

With Bhagavan's continued guidance, I hope to have the first meeting of our London group of devotees on 2nd Jan. 1966. If you agree, I suggest the name 'Sri Ramana Devotion Centre' for the establishment and 'Self-Study Group' for the devotees' association. It appears that Bhagavan wants it as a mere little branch of the main Ashram tree. I sought Bhagavan's guidance by opening the *October Mountain Path*. It opened at page 231, which gave this answer.

N. VASUDEVAN,
24 Laleham Avenue, Mill Hill, London, N.W. 7.

We are grateful indeed for having discovered through Bhagavan's Grace that *The Mountain Path*

is available. Its loving service is very much appreciated.

R. O. STUART,
Natal.

Congratulations on the *October Mountain Path*. I was particularly struck with Robert Linssen's article 'The Silence of the Mind'. As the editor of 'The Middle Way', though just about to hand it over, I am becoming more and more jealous of your success.

CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS.

What a good, balanced number the current (October) issue is, and full of meat. My congratulations on maintaining the standard, for indeed there is no other magazine quite like it.

CLARE CAMERON,
Editor of 'The Science of Thought Review'.

CORRECTION: The saying 'I am that I am' is not in GENESIS, as stated in the Editor's reply to R. Balasubramaniam on p. 209 of our issue of July 1965, but EXODUS, ch. III, v. 14. In a new version of the Bible it is translated as 'The God who IS'. The traditional Latin rendering is 'Ego sum qui sum', meaning 'I am who I am'.

Editor.

To our Subscribers

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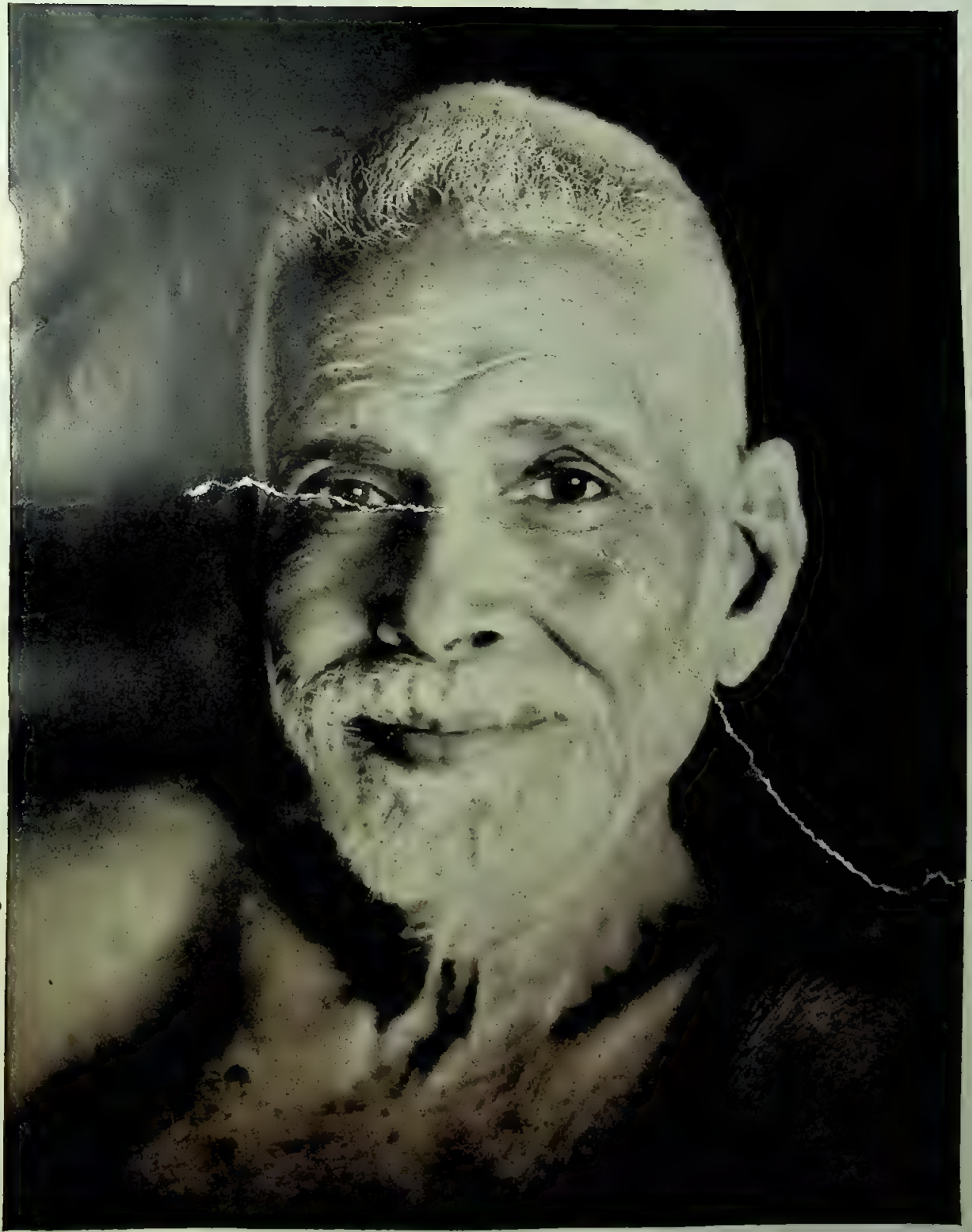
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

Editor: ARTHUR OSBORNE

VOL. III

APRIL, 1966

No. 2

HIGHER POWERS

(EDITORIAL)

It is generally agreed by anthropologists to-day that peoples called 'primitive' have or have had a conception of the Supreme Being, although in many cases this has got obscured behind an array of lesser gods, spirits and powers. An important implication of this is that, so far as religion is concerned, these peoples are not primitive but degenerate. Probably in other ways too, though that does not concern us here.

Supreme Being is as impartial as the sun. If one flower bud opens when the sun rises and another not, it is due to its own preparedness and not to any partiality of the sun. Similarly, Divine Grace flows everywhere, always; it is only man's willingness and ability to respond to it that varies. Supreme Being cannot be propitiated. Being all benevolence, it cannot be induced to become more benevolent to one than to another or in one instance than in another. All things manifest Supreme Being in its innumerable aspects; all things issue forth from it and return to it.

Man, however, develops an ego-sense, a conviction of separate individual being; and

insofar as this seeks to withstand the immutability of Supreme Being it will eventually be bruised and broken. Then Supreme Being will not appear to him benevolent but harsh and he will give It the name of Fate.

Arising from his ego-sense he has desires that he wishes to fulfil. At their best and purest these may converge in the desire to efface the ego-sense and return to conscious union with Supreme Being; however they very seldom are at their purest and best. Usually they are specific desires, although ranging over a wide area from the crudest egoism to the most exalted idealism and altruism. It is no use turning for fulfilment of these desires to Supreme Being, which does not even take cognizance of the ego that has them; therefore men seek other ways of attaining them.

One way is to pray to a single monotheistic Personal God Who is a crystalization, so to speak, of Supreme Being; but it is by no means the only way. Men also seek to harness Divine Power to their will or to propitiate gods or aspects of God through a variety of techniques. Even in Islam, the

most rigidly monotheistic of religions, people invoke specific Names of God for specific purposes, while in Christianity with its 'Three Persons in One God' they invoke the intercession of saints.

Invoking saints and angelic powers means seeking aid from the intermediate world between the human and the Divine. In most religions elaborate techniques have been framed for doing this, for propitiating benevolent powers and warding off harmful ones. When this physical world is full of such a variety of life-forms, some dangerous and others serviceable, the tiger and the lamb, the serpent and the eagle, it would be crass materialism to suppose the subtle world empty of such. The religions all recognize their existence. The New Testament speaks of angels and archangels and, on the harmful side, of devils possessing people. The Qur'an speaks of Muhammad preaching to the jinn as well as to humans. Buddha also is said to have taught in the deva-loka as well as on earth. If animism plays a large part in some modern Buddhist communities it is because they have substituted a wish to gratify their desires for Buddha's injunction to renounce them.

Spiritual degeneracy can take many forms, but two are particularly obvious. One is forgetting about Supreme Being, which, after all, is of no use to you as an individual but is eventually going to devour and re-absorb you, and concentrating on forces and beings of the subtle world and on the means of harnessing or placating them. The other is to forget all about the subtle world and believe only in a material world with or without a Personal God who made it. The former leads to animism and magic, the latter to materialism; the former is the degeneracy of the peoples called primitive, the latter of the anthropologists who study them.

Some anthropologists have held that religion grew out of magic. Religion cannot grow out of anything, being based on pure intuitional consciousness. Indeed, it does not grow or develop, but starts full grown and thereafter declines.¹ It is, however, true, as indi-

cated above, that magic is a degeneracy of religion. When the goal of self-purification is lost sight of and the purpose of harnessing subtle forces comes to be the acquisition of power and gratification of desires, then it comes to be magic. But that does not necessarily mean that it is ineffective; it may be both effective and dangerous. From a spiritual point of view, however, it is unworthy of consideration.

There is a similarity between the attitude of the advaitin and his direct opposite, the materialist, since both alike ignore the intermediate world with all its powers and wonders. The advaitin, seeking to realize the One Self that he is, understands that all that appears, whether earth or heaven, manifestation and dissolution of the universe, celestial beings in their splendour, the avatars and the prophets, Christ and his second coming, the Buddhas of all the ages, all manifest the One Self, because there is no other. Therefore to seek them out, however resplendent they may be, would be a distraction on the path.

The materialist also sees nothing but the physical world — but with what a difference! The powers and splendours of the intermediate world are not below but above his aspirations. He cannot even conceive of them. Whether or not he believes that some remote person called God created this physical world from outside of it, it is the physical world of things he can touch and see that he really believes in. How distressing it must be for him to be told by his own physical science that there is no such world, that things have no colour, shape or smell apart from his perception of them, that he is not sitting at a solid wooden table but before a cluster of atoms whirling about in empty space. Now that there is no longer any matter how is he going to be a materialist?

* * *

Let us now pass from theory to practice and see how non-physical powers operate. They fall into three main categories which

¹This theme is developed in *Buddhism and Christianity in the Light of Hinduism* by Arthur Osborne, ch. 3. Rider & Co.

are on the whole distinct although they merge at the edges.

The first is purely technical, through the performance of some rite; and in this, as in the working of physical science, the wisdom and purity of the operator is not a requisite, although his ability to concentrate is usually helpful and sometimes essential. A good example of this category is the yantra against scorpion stings which we published in our issue of April 1965 and which so many of our readers have found effective.

This mode of canalisation covers a vast range including most religious ritual and occult practice. It includes, for instance, the Christian practice of making the sign of the cross to avert evil influences and the Muslim use of 'Bismillah' for the same purpose. It covers the Mediaeval science of alchemy, the use of mantras and yantras, the Catholic rite of exorcism and even the efficacy of the mass. Indeed there is recognition of this in the Catholic tenet that the efficacy of the mass is not dependent on the purity and spirituality of the officiating priest — it is not he who is acting but a divinely instituted current that is acting through him. At the same time, it must be added that the more spiritual are the benefits sought from the practice of any technique the more helpful is purity and concentration on the part of the practican. This is technically explicable because impurity, inertia and mental distraction prevent the mind being a clear channel for the flow of the power that is being invoked. And the Catholic Church does, of course, recognize the desirability of purity and devotion in the priest who celebrates mass even while holding that the lack of these qualities cannot totally invalidate it.

Incidentally, the possibility of investing powers in a person modifies to some extent what I said in my editorial of July 1965 about the impossibility if a Guru guiding others farther than he has gone himself. A Guru may invest a power such as the awakening and guidance of kundalini in a disciple who will to that extent become his succes-

or, just as the power to great absolution is invested in a Catholic Priest.

Mediaeval alchemy was a highly technical science using physical experimentation, but since it aimed at spiritual development it insisted on purity in the practican. "This thing for which you have sought so long is not to be acquired or accomplished by force or passion. It is only to be won by patience and humility and by a determined and most perfect love. For God bestows this divine and immaculate science on his faithful servants, namely on those on whom he resolved to bestow it from the original nature of things. . . . Nor were they able to hold anything back save through the strength granted to them by God. For God charges those of his servants whom he has purposely chosen that they keep this divine science which is hidden from men and that they keep it to themselves."²

To discuss why certain actions produce effects that are not physically accountable would take us too far afield. It would open up the whole question of spiritual forces and subtle vibrations. And if the whole apparently physical universe is reducible to energy vibrations, as nuclear scientists seem inclined to think, it would also open up the question where and by what right a boundary is to be drawn between the physical and non-physical world. However, there is one important consequence to be drawn: that is that the widespread modern rejection of ritual in religion is depriving people of powerful aids for spiritual development and for defence against evil.

A further specification seems called for in this connection. As explained by Bhagavan in his *Upadesa Saram* (Instruction in Thirty Verses) quoted in our issue of January 1965, and also in the editorial and the article 'Paths to Self-Realization' by Dr. B. V. Radhakrishnan in the same issue, action cannot lead beyond action and therefore no ritual can produce Liberation. Therefore people who seek Liberation by the path of Self-enquiry, as taught by Bhagavan, main-

² Quoted by Arthur Osborne, *op. cit.* p. 91, from 'Psychology and Alchemy' p. 260, by C. G. Jung.

ly ignore ritual, and Bhagavan approved of this. But there are many who do not specifically seek Liberation but simply greater purity, greater devotion, general spiritual betterment, or who seek Liberation as the still unseen goal of a winding path; and it is for such as these that the appropriate ritual would be a powerful armament for progress and defence.

The second category is of powers that manifest themselves through some particular person. These may be spontaneous or acquired.

Spontaneous powers are not uncommon and it may be that, in accordance with the nature of our times (as explained in the editorial of our October 1965 issue and in the article 'Al Khizr' by Abdullah Qutbud-din in the same issue), they are becoming more common. There are many cases in the West where healing power manifests spontaneously. One such is G. H. Gedge whose article on 'The Modern Revival of Spiritual Healing' was published in our issue of January 1965. Another was Joel Goldsmith, a number of whose articles we have published. In India there are cases of a wider range of powers appearing at an early age before there is any question of spiritual attainment. One of these is Panrimalai Swami, about whom there is an article in this issue. Another is Sathya Sai Baba, who is regarded by his followers as a reincarnation of the original Sai Baba (about whose use of miracles there is an article in this issue). There may be various explanations for this. The most commonly applicable is probably that they are persons who had attained such a state of purity in their last incarnation as to enable power to flow through them unimpeded in this.

Acquired powers are to some extent due to a cultivation of generally available techniques and to some extent to development of an aptitude for spontaneous power that was inherent but not powerful enough to manifest without training. It is enough to say that they are not approved of by true Masters. In order to seek them, a man's mind must be directed towards them, not

towards Liberation. Therefore they cannot lead him to Liberation. Preoccupation with them is far more likely to distract him from it; and it can do this just as effectively as preoccupation with physical wealth and power. At best they exist within the phenomenal world which he should be striving to transcend and hold him down in it; at worst they degenerate into sorcery and magnify his ego by giving him power over others and winning their submission and adulation.

Midway between these two subcategories are powers which come to a man spontaneously in the course of his quest and as a by-product of it. They also can be a hindrance on the quest. Whether and how far to use them will be a matter for decision by the Guru or for sober, dispassionate judgement if there is no physical Guru.

The third category, into which the second may merge, is of those who have made themselves channels for the Divine Power by complete submission or dissolution of the ego which obstructs it.

A man feels (or, through meditation, can learn to feel) a reality or selfhood in him. It is impossible to define it and useless to give it a name. In comparison with it the world of people, things and events, including his own life and body, is felt to have only a relative reality, like a dream or like a bubble pretending to be a world. But very few are able, like the Maharshi, to remain in constant, clear awareness of this inner reality. More often there is a vague awareness, a belief, a recollection, a mental understanding, fortified by occasional flashes of clear intuitional knowledge.

There are two ways in which a man can regard this true and inner Reality. He can recognize it as the only reality of him and therefore give it the name of Self. This implies that he who recognizes it is a mere projection of it and mask over it and is acting a lie in presuming any independent reality. Alternately he can regard his body-mind complex as a real self other than this Reality, which he will then call God. Theorists try to blow this difference up into something big and argue learnedly that one attitude is right

and the other wrong, but actually it is a slight divergence, rather of emphasis than fact. Those who call the inner Reality 'God' appreciate nevertheless that it is "closer than breathing and nearer than hands and feet", while those who call it 'Self' appreciate that it is other than the body-mind complex which is regarded as self by almost all in their ordinary day to day living.

There is, however, a difference in practical implication. The apparent world, being a projection or manifestation of the inner Reality, is obviously malleable, can be shaped, changed or adapted — but who by? He who recognizes the inner Reality as the Self of him thereby negates any other, any ego or contingent self who could desire one course of events rather than another or be interested to canalise power for the curing of disease or removal of hardships or any other change in the course of things. Divine Power will flow through him owing to the absence of any ego to impede it, but there will also be no ego to direct it consciously. Miracles may happen but they will not be performed. The flow of events will be witnessed like a cinema show or a waking dream, with a feeling that they are right and fitting but without involvement. If the body-mind complex of such an Awakened One has any function to perform it will perform it in full aware-

ness, with scrupulous exactitude, like an actor playing his part on the stage, but, like the actor, without confusing himself with the part he plays. If he is cast in the role of Brutus he will stab Caesar; if he has to commit a stage crime he will suffer a stage punishment, but his real self, the self that he is off the stage, will remain unaffected.

On the other hand, he who still sees his body-mind complex as a separate entity apart from and yet submitted to that Reality still has the desires and aversions of an ego, although they are no longer pernicious or rebellious ones. He it is who will work miracles. The submission of his ego enables the Divine Power to flow through him, while its survival enables him to canalise this flow to ends that he finds desirable, to the alleviation of suffering and removal of discord. To the powerful attraction he feels towards that Reality which still seems other he gives the name of 'love'. He gives the same name also to the outflowing of Grace from that Beloved which makes him tingle in every pore and dissolve in pure felicity. In place of the serene abidance of the former type he will know the rapture of union with the Beloved alternating with the sweet anguish of separation. So long as his submission remains pure, an inexhaustible reservoir of power is at his disposal.

DISAPPEARANCE OF THE BODY

From A Note by ALAN CHADWICK

One day Bhagavan was telling us that the Tamil Saint Manikavachagar's body disappeared in a blaze of light leaving no residue. I asked him how that happened and he explained that the body is only the solidified mind. When the mind dissolves in Jnana and consumes itself in a blaze of light the body also is burnt up in the process. He mentioned other such cases also. I referred to the story in the Bible of Elijah being car-

ried to heaven in a chariot of fire, a poetic way of saying the same thing.

I then asked whether Christ's disappearance from the tomb resembled this in any way, but Bhagavan pointed out the difference that Christ's body still remained, whereas in the other type of phenomenon the body was entirely consumed. He explained that the subtle body is composed of light and sound and the gross body is only a concrete form of this.

SOME CONSEQUENCES OF ANATTA

By BODHICHITTA

However much scholars may dispute what is the original form of Buddhism and what texts may go back to the time of Gautama, there is no doubt that at the very heart of it lies the doctrine of anatta, no-ego. This all the schools agree upon. And this is the essence. It is what gives its fundamental character to Buddhism. From it flow important consequences. For instance, prayer in the sense of petition becomes impossible. Prayer postulates two beings : a small one to request a boon and a great one to grant it ; if there are no beings there is no point in prayer.

Anatta has both a static and a dynamic aspect. Statically it is an assertion that there is no ego, no separate individual being ; dynamically it is a reminder to realize this by dissolving the illusion of any such being. One who is pledged to this goal cannot ask for boons for the ego whose existence he denies and to the destruction of whose apparent existence he is pledged. He cannot logically pray even for assistance in accomplishing this destruction, for who is to assist whom ? He is not in fact trying to destroy an ego but merely to perceive (what he is already convinced of mentally) that there isn't one. It is true that devotional schools have arisen for those who flinch from the austere purity of the Dharma, that in Japan, for instance, there is a school of tariki or 'outside help' as well as jiriki or 'self-help', but this can be no more than a concession to weaklings. Anatta is a truth to be realized ; it can never be a boon to be conferred.

Historically the search for outside help is negated by Buddha's famous last words to the beloved disciple Ananda : "Therefore, Ananda, be lamps unto yourselves. Be a refuge to yourself. Seek no outer refuge. Hold fast to the Truth as a lamp and a refuge.

Look not to any one outside yourself for refuge."

This does not mean that man as an individual rejects help that appears to come to him from other individuals, simply that he perceives that the battle is being waged within him. As in other religions, he follows a guru, but the guru is only activating and inspiring his own inner effort. He takes refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha, but that is not renouncing the need for self-help ; it is only arming himself for it. He does not pray to any of them. As man is set on the world's stage, there are the forces of tanha or craving to bewilder him and the apparent realities of life to entice him ; and over and against these are the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha to show him the way. Set between them, it is he who has to arm himself and to make the effort. And in doing so he has to remember that he is not really fighting to destroy anything that exists but only striving to perceive clearly what does not exist.

Just as there is no place for prayer in Buddhism, so there is no place for miraculous powers. It cannot, of course, be said that in the long history of Buddhism no saints have exercised such powers or that no miracles have occurred spontaneously in the ambiance of a saint, but there is no tradition of miraculous powers. As a person becomes purified through mindfulness and strengthens his mind through the elimination of distraction and illusion such powers are quite apt to come to him, but they do not carry him forward towards the ultimate goal of Nirvana ; they do not, that is to say, help him to realize anatta, and therefore they are useless. Indeed they are dangerous insofar as they may distract him from the goal, just as physical wealth and power may ; therefore they are not to be indulged.

They can be used up to a point to help others, just as physical wealth and power can, but not to conduct others towards the goal of realized anatta, and therefore this plea also fails to justify them. In fact, just like physical wealth and power, they are more likely to be an impediment than an asset, and therefore it is better to refrain from seeking them and to renounce them if they come unsought.

Buddha, indeed, forbade his followers to cultivate or display them. There is a story of how a visitor set his bowl on the top of a high pole and challenged any of the monks to fetch it down and one of them yielded to the temptation to do so by practising levitation; when Buddha was told of it he reprimanded him, asking what good purpose had been served by this display of powers. In the Vinaya, the set of monastic rules that are said to have been framed by Buddha and are certainly characteristic of the early Sangha, one of the offences for which a monk could be expelled from a

monastery was claiming or displaying powers. It was not a question of whether the powers were genuine or not; it was not for fraud that he was expelled but for engaging in unfruitful and distracting activity.

Look at the story of the woman who brought the dead child to Buddha. To have restored it to life would have been making her an exceptional case freed in this one instance from the law of nature and would not in any way have conduced to the dissolution of her ego. On the other hand, by making her see that death and bereavement are the common lot of mankind he opened her eyes and set her on the path to freedom from suffering.

The Dharma is uncompromising in its logic, ruthless in its adherence to truth. If the ego is a fiction which creates a life of frustration ending finally in extermination, true compassion lies not in alleviating a few of the sufferings that it causes but in indicating its unreality so as to dispel suffering entirely.

ODE TO ARUNACHALA

By DAVID CORRYDON

Dear Bless'd Arunachala,
 Blessed Soul in form,
 Reaching up through foreign soil
 To touch the blue of heaven's space.
 A star rests overhead.
 Within your heart beats truth.
 Upon your slope treads peace.
 Your circling path brings knowing,
 Your summit is the goal
 And standing there in form,
 Challenging all who seek
 To ever BE as Thou,
 Serene,
 Content,
 And lost in all that is
 And ever will be.

WHOSE WILL BE DONE ?

By DR. T. N. KRISHNASWAMI

Prayer, parading one's weakness before God and asking that one's will be done, is useless. Even though a man may be praying for others it is fundamentally his own happiness that he is seeking. To pray for anything is offering resistance to the free play of God's will. Nothing should be allowed to come between God and the seeker, not even a prayer. To be still and surrender oneself to God is to abide by His will. This does not mean that one should be inactive in life, only that one should learn to lead a non-volitional life. "When all actions are performed by the qualities of Nature, only he who is confused by the ego-sense imagines himself to be the actor."¹

"A true Master will not ask the seeker to do this or that. The seeker has to gain cessation of mental activities. The active mind creates and such creation destroys one's self-nature. Becoming destroys being." The aim is simply to be inwardly still and to be aware. Effort must be made to still thoughts and there is awareness of the effort and of the thoughts stilled.

"All our experiences are only thought. Pleasure and pain are thoughts. And thoughts are within us. Pleasure and pain are not in the outer world. The kingdom of heaven and this world are not two different things. When the world is seen as within you it turns into the kingdom of heaven." God's presence is not a living reality in the world as we see it because man's mind is actively arranging the things of the world. Therefore it is logically correct to say that God is absent from the world; and where God is absent all doubts and fears are bound to be present.

That which is aware of the sorrows of the world is the contracted ego, while the world is the expanded ego. So the evil in the world is inseparable from the ego which

cognizes it and will last as long as the ego. "Until the 'I'-riddle is solved the world-riddle will remain to perplex and torment us." "When the Self is seen the world is not. Then one realizes that there never was any creation." How can there be suffering in the uncreated? Or what is there to ask for?

"One who says, 'I shall not strive for my own salvation till I have relieved the suffering of the whole world,' is like the compassionate dreamer who first wants to relieve the sufferings of the people in his dream before consenting to wake up." Those who want to do social work are like such an amiable philosopher.

It is the outgoing mind that entertains such apparently compassionate thoughts. The mind should not be occupied outwardly but turned inwards. Its power should be used to stop its habit of thinking. There is a state in which thoughts do not come, not even the 'I am' thought, and yet awareness remains. There are no problems for such a stilled mind. It is not necessary for the Self to be aware of the world but only to BE. Awareness of the world can be added to Self-awareness or not; it doesn't matter. The Self, being All, loses nothing by being aware of the world or by being unaware of the world. It has abiding peace and happiness whether aware of the world or not.

One should not lose sight of his 'I' in any circumstances. So long as he clings to it there is no harm in his leading an active life or doing philanthropic work. It is only the I-am-the-doer illusion that is harmful. The main aim should be to hold the mind constantly to the 'I' thought. This is the only remedy for the ills of the world. The only way to know God in this world is to know one's Self. One should not seek for

¹ Bhagavad Gita, III, 27.

God in the world but in oneself. Life's sorrows serve a purpose insofar as they spur the mind to seek God. One should turn away from the world and look inwards to meet the Divine Presence. The Upanishad puts it : "The total subsidence of the ego is the end of the world and is termed 'Siva, the Auspicious'."

Suffering is rooted in ignorance ; ignorance is removed by knowledge of the Spirit. This knowledge shows that the ego and the world to which we cling are fundamentally foreign to us and therefore cause suffering. The true teaching helps us to escape from the world which is synonymous with bondage and suffering.

THE LION'S ROAR

By DEREK SOUTHALL

We are enlightened men
But know not that we are
By hidden joy pervaded,
Immortal, perfect, wise.
Deluded by the stifling
Smog of self, we cling
To our quite partial view
And suffer needlessly.
Prejudice confusing
The player with his part.

As living leaves transmute
In time to hard black coal.
As frigid glacial ice
Was once free-falling rain.
So we are living fossils,
Unhappy pachyderms.
Our glowing essence veiled
By countless hazy clouds
Of seemingly trivial
Desires and decisions
Which hardening through habit
Petrify as pain.

Our internal sun eclipsed
And hypnotised by self
We dream, yet count ourselves
Awake, and crave for bliss.
No longer suspecting
Our treasure to be near,
We ravage time and space
In endless quest for truth.

To rouse us from our dream
We need to meditate,
Or practice peace of mind.
All other ways lack life,
Mere bones : no flesh or fire.
From meditation springs

Morality and love ;
Perfected deeds, insight
And lasting happiness.

True practice : inner calm
Involves a new awareness.
A turning round of mind
To view its source within.
To realise in truth
The inexhaustible void.
The indescribable
Presence or Absence,
Call it what you will
This deathless heart of things.
The uncontaminated,
Lucid and luminous
One entirety.

With self transcended, strife
And bondage melt away
Till naught remains but glory.
The boundless joy of life.
Then our illusory
World of particulars
Is clearly seen to be
The nature of our Lord.

Thus we hear the Lion's roar,
The gentle voice of stillness.
And see our ancestral face,
The void in all its fullness.
We sense the supreme law ;
Serene vitality,
And the elixir of grace ;
Self-less reality.
We are the radiance
Of stars, earth, mind and shell.
Free, to enjoy the dance
And know that all is well.

PETITIONARY PRAYER

By ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN

The English word 'prayer' has so much the meaning of 'petition' that it is not really apt for the ritualistic Islamic prayers that are said five times daily. Indeed, these could better be described as acts of worship or religious services. Not only do they contain no petition, except for guidance, but each one, even though performed only by a single person, is so complete and harmonious as to be comparable to a Christian Church service.

Nevertheless, petitionary prayer is practised in Islam, as it is in Christianity. It is bound to be in every theistic or dualistic religion. It was approved of by the Prophet. It is much under fire today by people who, on the basis of some theoretical understanding of Advaita, like to imagine themselves above it. Before trying to explain or defend it, let us first set out the arguments brought against it. In their extreme form they can make it appear very crude indeed. As though one were to say: "I recognize that God is wise and omnipotent, but in the immediate context of my own life I think I know best, so please God be guided by me." Even in praying for others the cynic can argue that there is a spiritual ignorance amounting to arrogance: "If I had the power to cure Aunt Anne's arthritis and give George a better job I would, so You please do."

Actually, however, it is the cynic or critic who is being crude, since he is presuming belief in an anthropomorphic God, like a bigger and more powerful man. The matter takes on a completely different tone if one thinks of spiritual power which can be directed to certain ends just as physical power can. In fact it is only a crude idea of God that makes prayer to God sound crude.

Let us first consider prayers for guidance, among which must be included prayers for greater strength, more fervent love, staun-

cher perseverance on the path. What of them? The prayer for guidance is the one petition which comes into the five ritualistic daily prayers of Islam; and it comes into every one of them. They all include a recitation of the Fatiha, the opening chapter of the Quran, which contains the words: "Guide us on the straight path, not the path of those with whom Thou art angered or those who are astray."

The critic who has a crude anthropomorphic idea of God may cavil at this too, saying: "You mean that you want to progress spiritually but it is God who has to be reminded to do his job of guiding and supporting you." Actually I may know very well that it is my own open and hidden weaknesses that are holding me back, urging me to rebellion and trying to lead me astray, and by my prayer for guidance I am ranging my conscious mind and will against them. I am praying for Grace not to associate myself with those tendencies in me which, by their ego-assertion, draw down the Divine Anger or those which wander about undisciplined and unguided. I may know, for instance, that day-dreaming weakens my will and undermines my spiritual effort, but knowing this is no help unless I take action or seek protection from it. Whether I think of the Divine Power to which I pray as the Transcendent Being who said to the world "Be! and it was" or as the Immanent who is "nearer to man than his jugular vein" (both Quranic phrases) may be largely a matter of theory to me in my present state. What is terrifically real and urgent is that the Source of guidance to which I pray is infinitely more potent than the individual self who prays. This explains the Sufi saying to the aspirant who called on the Divine Name and felt discouraged at receiving no reply: "Your calling on Me is itself My reply." The prayer for guidance is not theory or logic; it is a harnessing of the

mind and will to the quest, a reaching out from the human to the Divine. Whether it has logic or not, it has potency.

From this let us turn to other forms of petitionary prayer. Does one or does one not use one's intelligence and will power to bring about what one considers desirable? If one is sick does one make the mental effort of deciding on treatment and the physical effort of taking the treatment prescribed? If circumstances are difficult does one try to improve them or just accept what comes? If one's professional work is unsatisfactory does one take initiative in seeking promotion or a better job or appealing to influential friends? If so why should one suddenly renounce effort when it comes to spiritual means such as prayer?

What then is the position of the Advaitin who considers himself above petitionary prayer? He should renounce not only prayer but also worldly means of improving his position, whether with regard to health or wealth or anything else. Then he will not pray for health but will also not take medical treatment. Let him be logical. The Prophet's grandson, Hasan, was granted a pension by the ruling caliph. There is a story that for awhile the caliph neglected to pay it and Hasan was urged to send in a petition and remind him. He replied that he scorned to petition a fellow-creature who was as dependent on the Creator as himself. The position of the self-styled Advaitin who would seek worldly means of achieving his desires but not heavenly is the exact opposite of this. Let him be logical.

Even with regard to guidance, the Advaitin's way is to remember that the obstructions are in himself and must be removed by himself. That shows that his path is not one of passivity, as the acceptance of whatever comes might suggest; it is one of intense activity, not revolting against the Divine Will or Universal Harmony, which cannot be changed in any case, but striving to bring himself in accord with it by inner purification which will be reflected indirectly but inevitably in a harmonisation of outer circumstances. It is said in the

Quran that God does not change a people's state until they first change what is in themselves. That is a sentence worth pondering over in this connection.

Although the attitude of the Advaitin is pure submission (and therefore perfect Islam) when rightly understood and practised, there is the danger that it may degenerate into a purely mental stance, especially if misfortunes do not arise to test him. It is easy to accept acceptable conditions of life; but suppose poverty comes, or misfortune, or ill-health: will he still accept it, remembering that he is not the body to which it comes? If so all right, but it is well to remember the Quranic saying that when you have come safe to shore you forget the peril you were in and forget too that if you are smug Allah can cast you out on stormy seas again.

This shows that petitionary prayer cannot be dismissed so summarily. If the true Advaitin does not pray for the fulfilment of his wishes it is because he either has none or regards them as reprehensible symptoms of the ego and prefers to exorcise them. All honour to him. It is the desireless state that is to be aimed at; but one should examine oneself very carefully before deciding that one has reached it. If not, if one still has wishes and does seek their fulfilment, it is crude materialism to do so only by worldly means and ignore the spiritual.

Spiritual means of obtaining what one desires need not necessarily take the form of simple petitionary prayer; they may be more technical; indeed, it would not be out of place to say more scientific. The person who presses an electric light switch is using a scientific means of lighting the room whether he understands why the switch works like that or not, and the same applies to spiritual techniques. A Muslim who wishes to use spiritual means for bringing something about may turn his mind briefly in that direction and then repeat an incantation during which his mind will be on the incantation, not on the petition. Similarly, a Christian spiritual healer may take cognizance of a case and then empty his mind and

allow the healing Grace to flow through it unimpeded. A Catholic may ask for masses to be said for a certain intention. An English Buddhist, Lobzang Jivaka, tells in his book 'Imji Getsul' how the monks of a Ladhaki monastery where he was staying as a novice went to a drought afflicted area and recited a certain sutra. On studying the sutra he found that it had ostensibly nothing to do with drought and contained no prayer for rain. Nevertheless the rain came. I gather from an advertisement in 'The Mountain Path' that Hindus who have something to pray for write to ask Sri Ramanashram to perform a Sri Chakra Puja with that intention.

All these are indirect spiritual means of getting one's wishes fulfilled. The anthropologist might say that they are nearer to magic than to religion, but if so that only shows that magic was originally a branch of religion. The important thing is that to a large extent they work — probably a good deal more than direct petitionary prayer. Indeed, the strong accumulation of individual will or desire in direct petitionary prayer may disturb the atmosphere and impede the action of the spiritual currents which are canalised by a more aloof approach. This is particularly felt by spiritual healers, who find that wishing actually

obstructs the process of cure. I quote from a Taoist work to this effect." ... if meditation is aimed at curing an illness, the practiser should forget all about the thought of curing it and if it is for improving health he should forget all about the idea of improvement, because when mind and objects are forgotten everything will be void and the object thus achieved will be the proper one. ... If the thoughts of curing an illness and of improving health are clung to the mind will be stirred and no result can be expected."¹

This also explains why the prayers of a saint are so effective. Believers in all religions flock to a saint and ask him to pray for their desires — for health, a son, prosperity, whatever they may fancy their happiness to depend on. They have practical reasons for doing so, having seen many cases of his prayers being effective. The reason for this is surely obvious: the saint is the man who has succeeded in eliminating his ego, and he can therefore invoke the necessary spiritual force to achieve what is desired without any disturbing intrusion of self-will.

¹ *The Secrets of Chinese Meditation*, p. 189, by Charles Luk, Rider & Co., quoting from the Taoist Master Yin Shih Tsu.

A GRAIN OF SAND

By CORNELIA BAGAROTTI

The simplest things reveal
A wonder
As various
As the stars.
Held in the heart
Of a flower
All heaven lies.

MODES OF PRAYER

By INDIRA DEVI

On page 234 of our issue of October 1964 there is a short note on Dilip Kumar Roy followed by his account of how he came to the Maharshi. We give here a letter that he wrote to two of his Western disciples (kindly sending us a copy) in which he quotes his ecstatic disciple Indira Devi's description of the three types of prayer often mentioned by Christian mystics, that is petition, adoration and contemplation.

I was speaking about the three types of prayer the Western mystics so often describe : petition, adoration and contemplation. As I was trying to explain, Indira Devi went off into a *bhav-samadhi* and spoke in a state of ecstasy, intermittently patting her own head, as she often does, to be able to retain her normal consciousness.

"You know, Dada," she said, "a devotee of Gopal (Krishna), a Gopi (cowherd maid), missed Gopal who had gone away to Mathura. She simply yearned for Him.

"One day she heard that Gopal had just returned to Brindaban. She was overjoyed and set out for His abode.

"On her way she was thinking delightedly of all that she would say to Gopal; rehearsed how she was going to greet Him; wondered what she would ask Him, how she would implore Him to write to her in future without fail and send her messages of His Grace and ... and, above all, He must play His heavenly Flute of Bliss now that He is back again and so on and so forth..."

Indira looked at me and added succinctly : "This is petitionary prayer."

"But then," she went on, "as she draws near her destination, she feels thrilled. She crosses His courtyard and her heart is flooded with joy. A deep pace descends into her soul. She marvels what is going to happen

to her ... how will Gopal receive her ... how she will fall at His feet ... how she will react to His glance and so on ... She draws still nearer Gopal's sanctum ... approaches the door in an ecstasy of tears ... but still she has not met Him even though she hears His beloved footfall on the other side. ... Her heart would wing its way to Him, but the door is still closed. She waits, in ecstasy, adoring her heart's one Beloved whom she is yet to meet face to face". "This," added Indira, "is adoration."

"Then," she resumed in a thick voice, after a brief pause, "the door opens, at long last ... and there ... there stands her peerless Gopal, the world's Heart-charmer and lo, time stops and her thoughts are stilled. All she wanted to say dissolves ... and ... and ... how can she think of anything to say when she meets the One for whom she has lived all these days ... the only One for whom life is worth living? A bliss that passes all understanding pervades her being as He smiles at her and she ... she ... gazes at Him, self-lost. There is only communion ... the blessed fulfilment of oneness, the soul and her Swain of Brindavan locked in the last clasp of Love."

Her tremulous voice trailed off into silence. Then, she looked at me, her eyes moist with tears, and added : "This is contemplation." By which she meant, of course, *samadhi*.

GRACE AND PRAYER

By GLADYS DE MEUTER

'I sleep, but my heart waketh,' these words emerging from the wisdom of Solomon's Song of Songs, express the joyous unfolding of the heart-lotus under the rays of the spiritual Sun.

This burgeoning manifests in an inner compulsion to embrace Truth, to be freed from vain, multitudinous cares, and to reach a knowledge of that eternal science which is beyond transient existence.

Direct apprehension of Truth is possible only through Grace under whose radiant influence the heart receives the warmth of faith and exudes the fragrance of prayer. This attar from heaven purifies the mind, renders the soul humble and penitent and leads the seeker towards the passionless state of self-mastery.

At first prayer is but a fitful flame exposed to the winds of doubt and buffeted by the beguilement of the senses, but when the mind is steadfast in remembrance of God, restlessness and inertia recede, and prayer becomes a steady light.

Throughout the ages, whenever hearts bowed in reverent homage before a Man-God, the cry has ever been: 'Lord, teach us how to pray.' And loving instruction followed according to the unfoldment and capacity of the seeker. But whatever the word-garment of the spiritual teaching, Heart has ever been of paramount importance.

In the Upanishads is written: 'Within the city of Brahman abides the lotus of the heart wherein is a tiny ākāśa. That which is within that ākāśa is to be the object of the search for knowledge.'

It was explained to the aspirant that, the body being the dwelling-place of Brahman, it is described as a royal city, and the heart, shaped like a lotus-bud, likened to the

palace. The ākāśa (space) designates Brahman as all-pervading, subtle and incorporeal, and although in the initial stages of spiritual unfoldment Brahman may be considered by the aspirant to be limited by the heart, in truth Brahman is Infinite Being immanent everywhere and the Centre from which names and forms manifest.

When the mind has been trained to dive deep into the Heart, freedom from attachment to the external world arises as dispassion, the senses are subdued and thoughts cease their restless motion so that the Blissful Self is realized.

The devotee at the feet of his Guru thus learned that true prayer is having complete trust in the Higher Power Whose Grace leads to the KNOWING that the incorporeal and all-pervading Ātman is Brahman.

To Lao-Tse, Tao is the Nameless Simplicity the glory of which may be known only when the mind is free from disturbances and the heart reflects the quietude of divine silence. Those who attain such a state give forth a wondrous glow, coolness and serenity which the venerable Sage termed Heart-Repose.

In the Egyptian Book of the Dead the heart is weighed against the feather of Truth in the Hall of Judgment, and a prayer addressed to Osiris is couched in sincere tones: 'My heart which sitteth before Osiris hath made entreaty for me. Unto him have I given my heart's thoughts ... Understanding has come to me through my heart over which I have gained mastery. May this heart not be taken from me!'

In the Egyptian Bible homage is paid to the Indweller of hearts, and when the neophyte kneels with his hands clasped to his breast, he prays that he may enter the Abode of Rā which is that of the Quiet-Heart.

The Christian Contemplatives taught that prayer was perfected when the mind merged into the Heart. They termed this Heart-Prayer, and stressed the need to keep the mind thought-free when it dived deep into the spiritual Heart-Centre. As an aid to meditative prayer the Holy Name was to be repeated constantly either audibly or mentally until such time as the Name became firmly established in the heart.

Practise of the Silence was enjoined, and visions whether sensory or otherwise, were to be ignored and recognized as phantasies conjured up by the mind. No matter how entrancing or beautiful the images they were not to be cherished, but meditation was to be pursued until true angelic prayer arose, free of form and colour.

Blessed Nicephorous gave instruction on how to attain concentration through breathing, which method when correctly applied served as an aid for the merging of the mind into the heart.

Those Hesychasts who approached the early Fathers for spiritual guidance were told to fight the foes of the senses from the invincible stronghold of the heart. As

thoughts arose in the mind they were to be met with the sword of the Holy Name which puts the enemy to flight. Taking refuge in God, the single eye of true discrimination was to be cast on all phenomena, realizing their transient and illusive quality. Thought and speech were to be discarded for the Bliss of Heart-Silence. Thus Truth beyond relativity was arrived at, and the mysterious duality created by the ego transcended.

Often, when the soul is touched by divine yearning tears fall from the eyes. They flow from the Fountain of Life, and serve to cleanse the soul of impurities, ushering in a melting love and tenderness for Divinity.

Only the pure in heart may see God! When angelic prayer knocks on the Portals of Heaven and they open to reveal indescribable Glory, realization dawns that all creation breathes Universal Prayer in honour of I AM.

In the quiet cathedral of a celestial grove, when the tongue is still and thought immersed in tranquility, the perfection of prayer gives birth to sacred Heart-language which is beyond expression, shining in luminous splendour as Absolute Be-ing.

AT INTERVALS

Translated By K. SWAMINATHAN
from the Tamil of Muruganar

You meditate at intervals ?
Talk not of intervals, just be the Self
In one unbroken thread.
Hair after itching hair of thought
Who would pluck out,
When what's to do
Is shave the whole scalp clean ?

The Meaning and use of the Rosary in . . .

HINDUISM

By Prof. N. R. KRISHNAMURTI

Ardent devotees of Lord Siva, especially those of the Saiva-Siddhanta school, wear a string of beads known as the rudraksha-mala, which they use for counting when saying their mantra. The number of beads on the string varies according to the way it is worn. Even today one can see sadhus wearing these beads in their earlobes, round their wrists, on the crown of the head, tight round the neck or falling like a garland on the chest.¹ Three beads are worn in each ear, twelve round each wrist, thirty-six over the crown of the head, thirty-two or twenty-seven tightly round the neck, and a hundred and eight when worn as a garland. It is this last form of mala which is generally used for counting the repetition of a mantra, although the 'Padma Purana' declares that the use of the mala of twenty-seven beads gives special potency to the mantra.

These beads are seeds of the rudraksha tree which grows in the Himalayas. Both the 'Skanda Purana' and the 'Padma Purana' speak highly of the efficacy of wearing them. Two Sanskrit sastras, the 'Upadesa Kandam' and the 'Suta Samhita', give extensive accounts of saints who attained Liberation through them.

The seeds can be of four colours. The most highly prized are white, then reddish, then golden and lastly dark. The first and third varieties are rare, the other two common; so their traditional order of superiority is not on a basis of rarity. It may be on a basis of assimilation to the four varnas, white being suggestive of the Brahmin, red of the Kshatriya, gold of the Vaishya and dark of the Shudra.

A seed has a soft core through which a hole is pierced for threading it. A number

of lines run over the surface from end to end of this core, dividing the surface up into a number of crescent shaped sections. Beads with five sections are the most common, but there may be any number from one up to fourteen.

According to the 'Yoga Sara', spiritual powers corresponding to the gods abide in the beads according to the number of sections or 'faces' and this, therefore, determines the type of mantra for which they are suited. A bead with one face is sacred to Siva; with two to Siva and his Shakti, Parvati; with three to Agni, the God of Fire; with four to Brahma, that is God as Creator; with five to Kala-asi, that is Siva as destroyer of Yama, the God of Death; with six to Subrahmanya or Skanda; with seven to Adishesha; with eight to Ganapati or Ganesh; with nine to Bhairava, that is Siva in his ferocious aspect; with ten to Vishnu; with eleven to Ekadasa Rudras, that is the Eleven Rudras; with twelve to Surya, the Sun; with thirteen to Kama-deva, the God of Love; and with fourteen to Nilakanta, that is Siva the Blue-Throated. A sadhaka is expected to choose his beads to suit his mantra. The most favoured rudraksha mala among devotees is that with six faces, that is the mala of Subrahmanya, who is the second son of Siva and Parvati and is the God of War.

The name 'rudraksha' is a compound of the two Sanskrit words 'Rudra' meaning Siva and 'aksha' meaning eye, so the rudraksha is the eye of Siva. This is the mythological 'third eye' implying spiritual sight or Realization.

¹ As on the photograph of Sri Sitaramdas Omkarnath on page 186 of our issue of July 1965. (Editor)

There is a mythological story, symbolical like all such stories, describing the origin of the rudraksha. Three asura or demon brothers, Vidyunmali, Tharakaksha and Kamalaksha performed such austerities that they were able thereby to extort boons from Siva. (And, in parenthesis, there are a number of such stories showing that intelligently planned and inflexibly performed austerities can produce powers even, so to speak, despite the gods, that is to say without purity or enlightenment.) Thereby they made themselves invincible and acquired three flying citadels of gold, silver and iron respectively in which they roamed the earth and conquered not only this world but the

world of the gods. That is to say that by their occult powers they were able to dominate not only this world but the subtle worlds also. But even such powers evaporate before the Face of Truth. The devas prayed to Siva in their distress and he appeared before the asuras with a terrible look and yet at the same time a smile, as Truth is terrible to him who has rebelled against it and yet at the same time is compassionate. The citadels were burnt up and the asuras destroyed. At that same moment a tear fell from the eye of the Lord and, falling to earth, became a rudraksha seed from which sprouted a tree bearing rudraksha seeds for the welfare of the world.

CHRISTIANITY (CATHOLIC)

By EBBANA GRACE BLANCHARD

The Catholic rosary consists of 54 beads plus a pendant of two large and three small ones and a crucifix. The rosary is divided into five decades with a large bead between each two. The beads are fixed, not sliding on their strings, as in some religions.

The use of the rosary as a help to keep count of prayers said, is, of course, much older than Christianity. It is said to have been introduced into Christianity from the East, and there are many theories regarding this introduction. In the 16th century Pope Gregory XIII named the first Sunday in October 'Rosary Sunday'.

Crossing oneself, one begins the rosary with the creed said on the Crucifix. The Lord's Prayer is then said on the first large bead and again, when one gets to them, on the large bead at the beginning of each decade.

A Hail Mary (Ave Maria) is said on each of the small beads, both on the pendant and in each of the decades. The first three Hail Marys (those on the pendant) are specially dedicated to the intention of this particular saying of the rosary. For instance, if worship or devotion is the purpose they can be offered to the Father, the Son and the Holy

Spirit; if intercession, one can remember those being born now, then the living in all lands, then the dead; if the Church, then perhaps its past, present and future; if your personal spiritual life, then it may be penitence, resolution and praise.

On the large bead at the end of each decade the Gloria is said: "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen."

Five decades comprise a chaplet, but it takes fifteen to make a full saying of the rosary, since there are three chaplets, the first of the Joyful Mysteries, the second of the Sorrowful, the third of the Glorious.

The introductory pendant is not used again between chaplets when a whole rosary is said at one time, nor is it used at the end, though one may say the Anima Christi on the crucifix, to close the prayer.

The Five Joyful Mysteries are: the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Presentation of the infant Christ in the temple and the Finding in the temple when Christ, at the age of 12, was lost and sought by his sorrowing parents and found discussing with the learned in the temple.

The sorrowful Mysteries are : the Agony in the Garden, the Scourging, the Mocking and Crowning with thorns, the Way of the Cross and the Crucifixion.

The Glorious Mysteries, according to the Roman Catholic version, are : the Resurrection, the Ascension, Pentecost, when the Spirit descended upon the disciples in the upper room, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin and her Coronation with the glory of all the saints.

The essence of the rosary, however, is not the mechanical recitation of the formulae of prayer, but the contemplation of the 15 Mysteries of the life of Christ. This meditation or contemplation tends to be a simple mental vision of the subject matter of each Mystery.

A happy and balanced combination of three elements gives to the rosary a rich-

ness known to no other form of private devotion. The formulae used in the rosary are a most concentrated and sober expression of all aspects of Christian prayer. A deep analysis of the formulae can demonstrate it. Thus the continual, attentive recitation of these formulae sets in motion a psychological process of calming the nerves, tranquillising the whole person, keeping away distractions and disposing one for the highest contemplation. Finally it lends itself to a simple and effective form of contemplation to which it is more directly oriented than any other form of systematic meditation.

This is the bare outline of the rosary which, as will be seen, can comprise a complete religious service although performed in solitude.

BUDDHISM (THERAVADA)

By VENERABLE PHRA MAHA VICHITR TISSADATTA

The Buddhist Rosary has 108 beads. This number represents craving in all its forms whereby every being is bound to experience some kind of suffering in every type of existence. The Buddhist Rosary itself symbolises the way of getting rid of craving, step by step.

The practice of the Rosary consists in recalling to mind the virtues of the Buddha by repeating the syllables of the Pali words used in this recollection while counting the beads of the Rosary one by one. The Pali words for the meditation with the Rosary are spoken either aloud or mentally, with the syllables in both normal and reverse order, thus :

*Ti pi so, so ti pi, bha ga vā, vā ga bha,
a ra haṃ, haṃ ra a, sam mā sam bud dho,
dho bud sam mā sam, vij jā ca ra na sam
pan no, no pan sam na ra ca jā vij, su ga
to, to ga su, lo ka vi dū, dū vi ka lo, a nut
ta ro, ro ta nut a, pu ri sa dam ma sā ra
thi, thi ra sā ma dam sa ri pu, sat thā, thā
sat, de va ma nus sā naṃ, naṃ sā nus ma*

*va de, bud dho, dho bud, bha ga vā, vā
ga bha.*

Each syllable corresponds to one bead of the Rosary ; accordingly we have 108 beads and 108 syllables.

The English translation of this recollection would be as follows :

It is for this reason that the Blessed One is so purified, perfectly enlightened, endowed with knowledge and conduct, well-fared, a knower of (all) the worlds, peerless charioteer of men to be tamed, teacher of gods and men, the awakened one, the blessed one.

While practising, one should be mindful of the meaning of the syllables. If one misses even one syllable in the meditation, one must start again right from the beginning. Mindfulness and dedication are very necessary for this meditation.

The object of the practice is not only to gain concentration but to suppress and remove the 108 kinds of craving (tanha).

Craving, the root of unhappiness and suffering in life, appears in three main aspects :

- (a) Craving for sensual existence or sensation,
- (b) Craving for becoming ; that is, lack of permanent satisfaction,
- (c) Craving for annihilation, a form of escapism or aversion.

Each of these three divisions is multiplied by 6 because there are 6 'doors' through

which craving arises ; namely, the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind. This gives us 18 sides to craving. As these 18 can arise from either internal or external processes, the number of possibilities for craving are increased to 36. Yet again, any of the 36 may be related to the past, the present, or the future, making a final total of 108. Because the cravings are brought to awareness by the practice of the rosary, this practice with the rosary symbolises Purification of Mind, which is the Way to Enlightenment.

ISLAM (SUNNI)

By ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN

The name for the rosary in Arab lands is 'wird', though in India 'tasbih' is more commonly used. It consists of 99 sliding beads divided into three sections of 33 each by larger beads. At the end is a still larger elongated bead making up the hundred. It is said that the 99 movable beads represent the 99 Names of Allah and the end bead the Hundredth Name. However, the wird is not used only for invoking the Names but for keeping count in any incantation. And there

is no religion in the spiritual practices of which incantations play so large a part as in Islam. Some incantations are graded in three parts to fit the three sections of the wird ; others continue right through one or more repetitions of the wird. In fact sometimes a wird is made with a tail-piece of ten small beads beyond or beside the final elongated one, on which to mark off the hundreds or complete wirds recited.

When the *japa* becomes continuous all other thoughts cease and one is in one's real nature which is invocation or absorption. We turn our minds outwards to things of the world and are therefore not aware that our real nature is always invocation. When by conscious effort, or invocation, or meditation as we call it, we prevent our minds from thinking of other things, then what remains is our real nature, which is invocation. So long as you think you are the name and form, you can't escape name and form in invocation also. When you realize you are not name and form the name and form will drop off of themselves. No other effort is necessary. Invocation or meditation will lead to it naturally and as a matter of course. Invocation which is now regarded as the means, will then be found to be the goal. There is no difference between God and His name.

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.

CHRISTIAN HEALING

By SAGITTARIUS

When Christ sent out representatives in his lifetime, his instructions to them were to heal the sick and cast out devils as well as to teach. There is no doubt whatever that spiritual healing formed part of the legacy he bequeathed to his followers. We have evidence in the Acts of the Apostles that some of his immediate followers did indeed practise it. We have Christ's definite promise that their power would be no less than his. "He that believes in me, the works that I do shall he do also ; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to my Father."¹

And yet after the first generation of Christians this legacy seems to have been dropped. Why should it have been ? This is one of the puzzles of the Early Church. It would be tempting to say that they turned instead to sterile theological arguments, accusing one another of heresy ; and yet we have ample evidence that, despite the growth of intellectualism, there still were ardent Christians willing to face torture and martyrdom for their faith. And we know from what is happening today that devout Christians are capable of healing in Christ's name, just as he promised them, even without having attained to sainthood.

For it is today only that the legacy of healing that Christ left is being recovered. Throughout the centuries there have been occasional cases of saints performing miracles, but only today has the widespread practice of healing through the name of Christ by ordinary devout Christians, not themselves saints, been revived.

That 'in my name' is a peculiar wealth of Christianity. Muslims do not pray for boons or heal sickness in the name of Mohammad, or Jews in the name of Moses, or Buddhists in the name of Buddha, or Hindus in the name of Krishna, or Taoists

in the name of Lao Tsu. The potency of Christ's name is, as it were, an enormous spiritual bank deposit for Christians to draw upon, and cheques to any amount will be honoured. What a wonder that throughout the centuries they should go on believing that the deposit was there but not cash cheques on it, or not in the way Christ authorised !

In a general way, praying in the name of Christ, they certainly continued to draw on it. Indeed, the principle of intercession was still further extended and continues to be widely used, especially among the Catholics. Mary is called upon to intercede with Christ, and petitions for intercession are addressed also to the saints. Actually, some of the miracles attributed to the saints at the time of canonisation are answers to prayers of intercession made through them after their death. However, the whole body and tradition of Christian prayer continues to be in the name of Christ.

And why, reverting to the quotation given above, does Christ say "because I go to my Father" ? What has that got to do with it ? Tremendous as is the spiritual power brought on earth by a Master, it is increased, not diminished, by his shedding the body. Even though he already transcends the body during his lifetime it is to some extent a limitation and localisation of his power. When it falls from him his influence expands without being diluted thereby. This has been found in non-Christian circles also. So competent a witness as Sarada Devi, the wife of Sri Ramakrishna, remarked that his power had increased enormously after his death. The followers of Ramana Maharshi say the same about his power and guidance both at Tiruvannamalai and throughout the world.

¹ St. John, XIV, 12.

There is no religion in which the founder's power has turned so markedly towards healing as in Christianity. Mohammad himself did not perform miracles, let alone empower others to; and Buddha disapproved of his followers doing so. Christ enjoined it. As one sees Christian healing performed today it is quite different from either magnetic healing or faith healing. Magnetic healing, of which the modern pioneer is Mesmer, is the utilisation of the animal magnetism which some possess more abundantly than others to draw sickness out of a patient by passes and laying on of hands. Faith healing, which has much in common with the methods of Coue, is self-hypnotism or auto-suggestion, becoming healthy by believing that you are or soon will be healthy. Spiritual healing is healing by the Grace of God. The healer aims at eliminating his ego, thoughts, desires, even the desire to heal, and making himself a mere channel through which the Grace of God flows: and healing takes place. In its purest form, as taught by Joel Goldsmith and practised in the 'Infinite Way' groups, the healer does not need to lay on hands or even to be in the presence of the patient, he does not need to know the patient's name or the nature of the sickness; it is enough for him to turn to God, as the Source of all health, and allow the healing influence to flow.² Even in less direct modes of practice, the essential thing is for the healer to feel in true humility that it is not his power but the Divine Power or, more specifically, the power of Christ flowing through him or answering his prayers, as the case may be, that effects the cure.

Is faith also necessary on the part of the patient? It is certainly a great help, but in this case 'faith' does not mean merely a passive belief that the cure will work but an active response to it, participation in it. Even the patient, the one at the receiving end, ought not to be passive and inert and expect to be carried along. After effecting a cure Christ said: "Thy faith hath made thee whole." That means: your active res-

ponse to the healing influence enabled it to work on you. But this does not equate spiritual healing with faith healing. In faith healing whatever influence there may be is invoked by the faith itself and is often no more than auto-suggestion. In spiritual healing a powerful force is set in motion and faith, although of great importance to facilitate its working, is not essential, as may be seen by cases of healing, usually of young children, in which the patient is not informed or asked to co-operate. It will be recalled that G. H. Gedge instances such a case in his article on spiritual healing in *The Mountain Path* of January 1965.

Spiritual healing may go far deeper than the removal of physical symptoms. Christ himself indicated this when, in his lifetime, he said after effecting a cure: "The sins be forgiven thee." We know today that many ailments are psycho-somatic, that is to say are physical symptoms of disordered states of mind. In such a case temporary removal of the symptoms is no cure. They will return or be replaced by others. The only real cure is to smooth out the tangled state of mind that caused them. That is what psychiatrists try to do with varying degrees of success. If the Christian healer does it — and in a far wider range of cases than the psychiatrist can handle — that does not mean that he is a psychiatrist or that he can forgive sins but simply that he has succeeded in making himself a channel through which the Christ-power can flow. Which is more likely to heal the disordered state of mind that has caused a disease: an injection or a prayer?

But that does not mean that prayer or spiritual healing without prayer can work only in psycho-somatic cases. The Christ-power is not limited in its applicability. There are examples enough of its effectiveness in cases as near purely physical (broken bones and so on) as anything can be: cases enough for any who will consent to look at them.

² See 'The Art of Spiritual Healing' by Joel Goldsmith, Allen & Unwin.

THE POWER OF PRAYER

By DILIP KUMAR ROY

Dilip Kumar Roy, for a note on whom see page 234 of our issue of October 1964, has sent us the following excerpt on the healing power of prayer from his book 'The Flute Calls Still' (pp. 328-333) reviewed in that issue, together with a photograph, not included in the book, of the child who was healed.

It has been given to me, many a time, to experience and verify the marvellous power of prayer. But only during the last fourteen years (since the advent of Indira) have I prayed for others, especially those who have been desperately ill and given up by the doctors and, as you know, they have all recovered miraculously. But what happened this month can claim to take the cake and, fortunately for us, the whole Ashram has borne witness to this. It happened like this.

On the 14th of March, B's fourth birthday, she, with her mother, was returning from our temple to their house when a jeep knocked her down all of a heap ; her skull was fractured in three places, the pelvis bones and the thigh bone, too, were broken. A deep wound just over the left eye made one gasp how on earth the eye could have escaped ! But the worst injury was to her intestines and two operations had to be performed one after the other. Derelict with grief, R implored us to help. The surgeon had told them that there was no hope at all. Yet the stricken mother, in tears, went on imploring Indira in Hindi. "Tell me Didiji, she won't die, will she ? Oh save her Didiji — —" and so on.

It was then we started praying to our Lord and Radharani (Krishna and Radha). From the nursing-home a good-hearted lady, rang up again : no hope ! But we prayed on till, on the morning of the 23rd of March, Indira, while praying, suddenly saw Hanumanji. You cannot put it down to auto-suggestion or wish-fulfilment as we were calling not to him but to our Lord and Radharani. But as soon as the resplendent Lord Mahavir flashed before her, she appealed to him to save



the child. He only smiled, she said. I was deeply relieved, as Hanumanji was instrumental in saving Sri Lakshman, when the latter was mortally wounded, with a miraculous herb called vishalya-karani. Thus Hanumanji is worshipped by thousands in India as a Divine Healer as well. So, I told Indira jubilantly that the child was now saved, saved, saved ! A few among the sceptics smiled wisely with raised eyebrows and they could hardly be confuted rationally, the less so as my own confidence was based only on a blind faith in the power of prayer answered by a mystic vision symbolising Divine intervention. And, would you believe it, on that very day the lovely little girl was declared "out of danger" by the amazed surgeon ! God is great, great, great and so is His deputy, Lord Mahavir, the miracle-healer !

So, my friend, how can one still doubt that miracles do still happen even in this our kali yuga ? Of course I know that those who have not seen what we have are unlikely to

undersign our faith in or interpretation of Indira's vision, still less to share our profound conviction, not having our experience to go by. It is not for nothing that Simon said that he must refuse to believe in Christ's resurrection till he saw the manifestation personally. Do what we will, the gulf will remain deep between the conviction of those who have seen and those who have not (which, incidentally, is the root cause of the so-called rational misunderstanding of the seer's faith and fervour the world over). I will, therefore, leave it at that and end with what is more rewarding, to wit, two excerpts from Dr. Alexis Carrel, the man of science and Nobel Laureate whose famous book, *Man the Unknown* created a stir in Europe and America three decades ago. I started reading it a few weeks ago. In Chapter IV he has much to say fully endorsing the faith of believers who claim that prayer can bring about miraculous cures of "various affections such as peritoneal tuberculosis, cold abscesses, osteitis, suppurating wounds, lupus, cancer etc. ... The miracle is chiefly characterised by an extreme acceleration of the process of repair. ... The only condition indispensable to the occurrence of the phenomenon is prayer." And although he is not a spiritual aspirant, he has recorded his experience thus: "But there is no need for the patient himself to pray, or even

to have a religious faith. It is sufficient that some one around him be in a state of prayer."

And then it so happened that I lighted on an article of his, condensed in the *Reader's Digest*, this month. The article is entitled: Prayer is Power. Let me cite a few lines:

"Prayer is not only worship; it is also an invisible emanation of man's worshipping spirit — the most powerful form of energy that one can generate. ... As a doctor, I have seen men, when all other therapy has failed, lifted out of disease and melancholy by the serene effort of prayer. ... When we pray we link ourselves with the inexhaustible motive power that spins the Universe. ... We ask that a part of this power be apportioned to our needs." And he concludes: "Today, lack of emphasis on the religious sense has brought the world to the edge of sheer annihilation. Our deepest source of power and perfection has been left miserably undeveloped. Prayer, the basic exercise of the spirit, must be actively practised by men and nations. For if the power of prayer is again released and used in the lives of common men and women there is yet hope that our prayer for a better world will be answered. ... True prayer is a way of life, and the truest life is, literally, a way of prayer."

POWERS

If you can walk on water
 You are no better than a straw.
 If you can fly in the air
 You are no better than a fly.
 Conquer your heart,
 Then you may be somebody.

SHEIKH ANSARI

AN ANGRY PRAYER

By JEAN BUTLER

Some years ago my daughter Martha and I were living on the island of St. Croix in the Caribbean. At that time the Virgin Islands (in which group this falls) were so poverty stricken that they were spoken of as "the world's poor-house".

One evening I went into the local drug store and found the chemist, Mr. Edwards, arguing in English with a little Puerto Rican peasant who was pleading volubly with him in Spanish.

Mr. Edwards was saying: "I'm sorry I can't give you any credit. I don't own the drug store. I am only an employee and have to obey orders."

The peasant answered: "It is only until my tomatoes are harvested. Then I can pay you."

Mr. Edwards was unmoved.

"But," cried the peasant in despair, "what will my son do without the medicine?"

At that point I said rather angrily: "Give him the medicine, Mr. Edwards, and put it on my bill."

I turned to the peasant and asked what was the matter with his son. A torrent of Spanish poured forth as he explained. He had five children ranging from fourteen years to three months. His wife had died giving birth to the baby. The oldest boy had epileptic fits, as many as five a day. By law the children had to go to school, but when the eldest boy had his medicine he could stay at home in the mornings and take care of the baby while the father worked his land. If the boy did not have his medicine he could not be left with the baby. Nor could he go to school. The only thing the father could do was to tie the baby on to his back when he went to work on his land and leave the boy unattended in the house; and on one such occasion the boy had had a fit during which he broke his leg.

A wave of such intense fury, pity and sheer horror came over me that for a moment I turned dizzy — not only on account of the little peasant but also of all the others in the world who were equally suffering and equally hopeless and helpless.

I told the peasant that I knew a great specialist in New York to whom I would write for a new medicine I had been reading about. I wrote down the peasant's name and the age and weight of his son. "The medicine should come in about ten days," I said, "and I will have it sent care of Mr. Edwards for you."

I rushed out into the night blind and sick with rage against God. "Damn You!" I cried, "What are You doing? Why don't You at least help the poor and sick who can do nothing to help themselves and who have nothing?" I cried and cursed all the way up the long hill to my house, hating the world, hating God, hating the unspeakable injustice of life. All night, even in my sleep, I alternated prayers with curses and invectives and blind anger. Day and night for a week I had no peace. I directed my thoughts repeatedly to the sick boy, saying to him: "God made you in His image and likeness. God is perfect, without flaw or sickness. Be you therefore perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect. That is what Christ said to you." This alternated with my repeating that "not even a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowing it." And I pointed out somewhat bitterly that the Son of God had said: "Inasmuch as you do it to one of the least of these you do it also to me."

Gradually the anger and frenzy died down, but remembrance of the peasant and his epileptic son continued day and night. One evening, about ten days after my first meeting with the peasant, I was just going into the drug-store when a bare-footed man in worn overalls and a big straw hat came

out, holding a package in one hand. On seeing me he swept off his hat, waved the package in the air and exclaimed excitedly : "This has just come, the medicine for my son. But I no longer need it. Something has happened."

It was the same peasant. I had not recognized him with his hat on. I knew what was coming and felt faint because of it. I said : "Remember, Senor, the Bible says that the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. What He does is a mystery to us. Don't ask any questions. Just go to the church and give thanks to God."

"But Senora," he said, "I must tell you what has happened. Since we talked the other night my son has had no more fits. What shall I do with this ?" And he held out the box of medicine.

I had known what was coming. "Don't open it, Senor," I said. "You won't need it. Just go to the church and give thanks to God." And I turned and rushed up the hill to my house, thinking, "Excuse me, God ! Forgive me !" — consumed with humility and shame at my former rage, overflowing with love of God.

On a Sunday morning some months later, when I had completely forgotten the peasant and his son, I was leaving my house with

Martha to go to the beach when an ancient truck full of people dressed in their Sunday best came roaring up the hill and stopped outside my door. One by one they scrambled out and came on to the terrace, each one carrying something in his hand. They made quite a pile there — fruit, eggs, chickens, fish, freshly baked bread, a bottle of wine, lobsters — and then they returned to the truck, while I kept on remonstrating : "You have made a mistake ! You have come to the wrong house ! I didn't order anything !"

Just then my little Puerto Rican friend, scarcely recognizable in his Sunday clothes, came up to me shyly and said : "Senora, these are my relatives. We have brought you these gifts to show our appreciation for what you did for my son."

"But Senor," I protested, "I did nothing, nothing ! Please try to understand me. It was not I who did it !"

Then I asked him about his son, how he was now. He glowed with quiet pride. "He has gained fifteen pounds," he said. "He is quite well now. I sent him to the island of St. Thomas to work on his uncle's farm for a few weeks and now he is back here with me. He works on the land with me in the morning and we earn enough to pay a girl to look after the baby, and in the afternoons he goes to school. He has never had another fit."

So long as we think we are doing something ourselves as individual beings, we are merely struggling and achieving nothing spiritually. When we know that the divine power active in the universe is responsible for all that we do, the idea 'I am the doer' disappears. When the ego-sense rises in us the whole game is spoiled. We are caught up in the meshes of karma. Sometimes we are happy, sometimes unhappy.

—SWAMI RAMDAS

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

By V. KAMESWARA RAO

I had a dream one night many years back in which a saintly old man with a short white beard blessed me with his benign and radiant smile and beckoned me to him. Sunrise put an end to sleep and dream alike and I woke to find myself back in the dull routine of life. I went into the kitchen to tell my wife of my happy experience, but I could not identify the saint I had seen. Could it be Ramana Maharshi, about whom I had read in a book called 'Self-Realization'? I asked a friend of mine who often went there whether he would take me with him and he agreed. We set off that very day, arriving at Tiruvannamalai next morning.

I found the Ashram a quiet place with a few cottages and a meditation hall. We went straight into the hall and there on a couch sat the Maharshi, the saint of my dream, clad only in a loincloth. I felt that I was in the presence of a god. I fell prostrate before Bhagavan (for this was the name my friend used in addressing him). A group of silent men and women were seated on the floor on either side of him. Close to him an elderly bearded man was sitting binding a small book by hand.

Bhagavan asked me whether I had had my coffee, so I went out and had a bath and breakfast. When I got back I found that Bhagavan himself was stitching the book. I wondered why he should do it, and then I noticed how carefully he worked at it and showed the bearded man how to do it. God is all perfection. When a man realizes God-head he also attains perfection, he also pays full attention to every detail. That was the thought that came to me when I saw Bhagavan binding a book.

When we went for lunch Bhagavan sat facing two groups of devotees, Brahmins to his right and non-Brahmins and non-Hindus



to his left. I heard him tell the server that the rice was not well cooked. I was told that he himself was a good cook and had often worked in the Ashram kitchen.

As a government servant I had to pass an examination in a second language within a prescribed period. The term was only a few months off. I decided to take it in Tamil, although I knew very little of the language. I was a bit worried about it, so I told an older devotee that I would like to have Bhagavan's blessings for my success. He took me to Bhagavan late in the evening and I prostrated and told Bhagavan my trouble and asked for his blessing. He replied 'parava illai', 'don't worry', which made me feel very happy. He advised me to take the little book 'Nan Yar' ('Who am I') printed in English, Tamil and Telugu (my own language) and read it with the help of a Tamil tutor.

I woke early next morning and felt happy, waiting till sunrise should enable me to buy the books at the Ashram bookstall. The night

I first dreamed of Bhagavan sunrise seemed to come too soon, but now I could hardly wait for it.

Bhagavan passed outside the cottage where I was staying next morning. I went and prostrated before him and asked his permission to leave. He gave it but asked why I was in such a hurry. My friend expressed a doubt whether I should be able to go that day, in view of what Bhagavan had said; but I had to get back. So after I had bought the books we went to the station in the Ashram bullock-cart. When we got there, however, I was told that there was a two-day strike on the railway, so we went back and told Bhagavan. He smiled. Two days later I again asked for leave to go and he said 'Very well'. This time we walked to the station and a cart followed us with our baggage. When we arrived the train was already in but the cart was not yet in sight, so I thought I would surely miss the train. But Bhagavan had said 'very well' so I felt I should stop the train and indeed travel 'very well'. I therefore went to the station master and told him that this was my second attempt to leave the Ashram and asked him to detain the train for a few minutes till my baggage arrived, and he agreed.

Once I was in the train I fell to pondering. When Bhagavan had asked me why I was in a hurry to leave I couldn't leave although I tried. When he gave the all clear the train was stopped to take me. It worked both ways. He had also assured me of success in my Tamil test although I knew scarcely a word of the language and the test was to be held in a few months. I felt that it was hardly worth while engaging a tutor, but experience told me that Bhagavan was dependable. The train journey was sufficient proof. So when I got home I engaged a tutor and stayed at home during the summer recess of the lawcourts, reading 'Who am I?' in Tamil. The written test came along. I had to translate an English speech into Tamil, and somehow I passed. Then there was the more frightening oral test in Madras, but it was made very easy and I passed that too.



From one point of view this whole test seemed to me useless, since there was no likelihood of my ever serving in Tamilnad; but from another point of view it was a very necessary experience, since it confirmed my faith in Bhagavan. I could only judge him on my own level and in the light of my own experience, even if it was nothing more than a train journey or a Tamil test.

In February 1949 my eldest son had a severe attack of smallpox. After a few days the doctor warned me that many people were dying of it and the chances of recovery were slight. I sat at the boy's bedside reading religious poems so as to keep his mind on God, since he was not expected to live. Then, on February 4th, the idea suddenly came to me to ask Bhagavan for his blessings, as we were in great distress. So I wrote to him:

Beloved Bhagavan,

I pray for your blessings on the suffering child and his parents.

Ever at your feet,

V. Kameswara Rao.

Early next morning my sister, who had been taking her turn sitting by the boy during the night, told my wife and me that she had had a vision of Ammavaru (the spirit of smallpox) leaving our house and asking her to take care of the boy. She gathered from that, in accordance with popular belief, that the boy would recover and no one else in the house get the disease. A few hours later a friend came in and gave me some sacred ashes from Sri Ramanasramam. Another good omen. We all began to feel hopeful. On the 8th I received the following letter from the Ashram :

Dear Sri Kameswara Rao,

We have your letter of the 4th inst. and the same was perused by Bhagavan. Prasadam (sacred ash) is herewith sent with Sri Bhagavan's gracious blessings for your child laid up with pox.

Sri Bhagavan and bhaktas are well.

Venkataraman, for Sarvadhikari.

The letter thrilled me, but how did Bhagavan know that my son had smallpox ? Why ask ? How could I know how Bhagavan knew ? Anyway, my son survived and is in good health.

I continued to be curious how smallpox came to be mentioned in the Ashram letter. Some elderly persons suggested that the moment Bhagavan saw my letter he received a mental picture of my son bedridden with smallpox. Later, however, Sri Bhagavatula Annapurnayya Sastri of Tenali gave an explanation that appealed more to me. "Was it necessary for you to write to Bhagavan in order for him to know what was happening in your house ? Is he not all-pervading and all-knowing ? But he does not interfere unless asked to and called upon. If a man is singing in Bombay and you want to hear him you must switch on the radio. If you don't, the radio will not receive his song and

you will not hear it, although he is singing just the same. Similarly if you want Bhagavan's blessings you must establish contact with him in the right way."

My faith in Bhagavan increased enormously as a result of this, because it was a matter of life and death for my boy and he gave him life.

On 17th March 1949 a big ceremony was held at the Ashram for the consecration of the temple over the shrine of Bhagavan's mother. I decided to go and to take my family and my mother with me. I applied for two days casual leave, made all arrangements and came home at 2 p.m. A car was waiting at the door to take us to the station. Suddenly I felt that I should not go. My wife and mother naturally protested, but it was no use. Our baggage was taken out of the car. Every one was annoyed about it but I merely said : "Perhaps Bhagavan doesn't want me to see this function. I too am sorry but I can't help it."

At about nine o'clock that evening I received a telegram that the only son of my third sister was dangerously ill with meningitis. and that I should send my mother there at once. I put her on the train together with the sister who had looked after my own son when he had smallpox. On arrival this sister wrote me a frantic letter saying that the case of my nephew was hopeless and that the only chance of saving him, if at all, was to invoke the blessings of Bhagavan. So on March 30 I again wrote to him. The following reply was received with the next day's date :

Your letter of the 30th instant was received and placed before Sri Bhagavan. May Sri Bhagavan's blessings be on the child and his parents. Herewith prasadam enclosed.

My nephew recovered. We understood then why I suddenly had to cancel my journey to Tiruvannamalai. If we had gone the telegram would not have reached me, my mother and sister would not have gone in time, and I should not have written to ask Bhagavan for his blessings. Hence my erratic decision,

prompted by something unknown to me at the time.

Came the fateful year 1950 when Bhagavan left his body. Physically he is no more with us. But he remains forever in our hearts. There are thousands of humble folk like me who received from beloved Bhagavan things they could never return. Nor was any return expected. God fulfils human needs so that man may develop divine discontent. It is human nature to get and forget ; it is divine nature to give and forgive.

Man is God's child. Just as a parent satisfies the childish needs of a child, even though they may be ultimately unnecessary, so does God satisfy the immediate though temporary needs of man so as to stimulate a desire for the ultimate and eternal need—the need to attain Godhead. Arthur Osborne wrote in '*The Incredible Sai Baba*' that Baba used to say :

"I give people what they want in the hope that they will begin to want what I want to give them."

THE SEER'S WITHIN

By HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

All in the Each, a feast of Truth, a blaze,
 Life's sorry dual separation done.
 Something in one begins to realize
 That it is possible to change the flesh
 With all its cells into a heaven of eyes
 Smiling with wise aloofness on the mesh
 Of pale illusions wandering below,
 There in the shadow-haunted depths clean-cloven
 To tremulous gleams of treacherous colours woven,
 Wide-spread to snare the soul and slowly capture
 Its sovereign meaning and authentic rapture.
 How wonderful thou art,
 How crystalline, O Vision of the heart!
 How like a high-born seer thou dost remain
 Above the world's annoy,
 Interpreting each weariness, each pain
 Of life around in terms of veiled joy!
 How automatically in thy plan
 Each image takes a sure and equal place,
 The cramped prison-cell, the boundless space,
 The fleeting bird, the grass, the drop of rain,
 Both haunted beast and man!
 Continually I sense thee freeing
 The outer eye into a deep and deeper seeing.

AUTOMATIC DIVINE ACTIVITY

By PROF. G. V. SUBBARAMAYYA *

On 31st October 1937 my two-year-old daughter Indira suffered two infantile fits, the second more severe than the first. Suddenly she became unconscious, all vital organs stopped functioning and she seemed practically dead. The allopathic doctor declared his helplessness and advised Ayurvedic treatment. Branding between the eyes by an old man with his tobacco pipe made the child moan feebly and slightly revived the vital functions. Still she did not rally but lay moribund. Two Ayurvedic physicians sent for, one after the other, could not be found. At this crisis my eye lighted on the picture of Sri Bhagavan and I prostrated, saying within myself, "O Bhagavan, all human aid having failed, you alone must save." Getting up, I mechanically opened the drawer, took out a telegraph form and wrote an express message praying for Sri Bhagavan's Grace upon the child. The telegraph authorities sent me word that the message would reach the Ashram at 7 p.m. Precisely at 7 p.m. both the Ayurvedic physicians arrived simultaneously and also Sri V. V. Narayanappa came, put into my hands an envelop addressed to me and said: "Here is Sri Bhagavan's prasadam for the child." It struck me then as a miraculous response of Sri Bhagavan to my prayer. Sri Narayanappa explained that it was the prasadam which I had got for him the previous year when he had been ill and which he had preserved in the same envelop. It now struck him to make use of it for the ailing child. The two doctors, consulting together, treated the child and assured me that she was out of danger. That night, sleeping beside the child, I had a marvelous dream. I was in Sri Bhagavan's hall. Sri Bhagavan reclining on his couch as usual. In front of him stood a dark, fierce-looking person of gigantic stature. Sri Bhagavan with his forefinger motioned to him

thrice to leave the hall. Accordingly the stranger left by the first entrance. Then Sri Bhagavan turned to me, called me near and enquired: "How is your child?" I replied: "Bhagavan, by Your Grace she is better." Then Sri Bhagavan said: "She will be all right, don't fear," and put his hand on my back. With his touch I thrilled and the dream melted. The next morning I received the following reply from the Ashram: "Received your wire yesterday night at 7 p.m. and it was perused by Sri Bhagavan. We assure you of Sri Bhagavan's blessings on the child that she may recover. Pray be not anxious."

In reply to my letter relating the above incident and the dream the Ashram authorities wrote: "We are very glad to note that through Sri Bhagavan's Grace your child recovered from almost a critical state."

During the ensuing Christmas holidays when I again visited the Ashram I asked Sri Bhagavan what he thought on reading my telegram. He merely said: "Yes, I read your message and also noted that the clock was then striking seven."

I again persisted: "Bhagavan, did you not think that you must do something to save the child?"

Straight came Sri Bhagavan's reply: "Even the thought of saving the child is a sankalpa (wish), and one who has any sankalpa is no Jnani (Realized Man). In fact any such thought is unnecessary. The moment the Jnani's eye falls upon a thing there starts the automatic divine activity which itself leads to the highest good. The conversation was all in Telugu except for the phrase 'automatic divine activity', which Bhagavan uttered in English.

* From *Sri Ramana Reminiscences* available from Sri Ramanasramam.

A BET ON A PRAYER

By K. K. NAMBIAR

It was in the year 1944, when I was stationed at Madras as City Engineer of the Corporation of Madras. Due to the severe petrol rationing in force, I could not make as frequent visits to Sri Ramanasramam at Tiruvannamalai as I would have liked to. Even if I went by train, it was very inconvenient to be without a car at Tiruvannamalai. My sister Madhavi Amma and my wife were also very anxious to make a visit. I told them that I would pray to Sri Bhagavan to help me to take a trip soon, and I would go only if I could get a car to move about in Tiruvannamalai. A couple of days later, a friend of mine Sri Venkatarathnam, the Sub-divisional Magistrate at Tiruvannamalai called at my office and suggested that we should go to Tiruvannamalai and that he would meet us with his car at the Railway Station and also put us all up at his residence. I felt that my prayers were being answered and made arrangements to go to the Ashram with my sister, wife and children. We had comfortable first-class accommodation although we had to change trains at Villupuram Junction. When we reached Tiruvannamalai station early in the morning, Mr. Venkatarathnam was there not with one car, but with two. The second car came in handy as there were five of us in the party including the two children.

I was talking to Mr. Venkatarathnam at his residence about my implicit faith in Bhagavan looking after his devotees, when he said "let us see about your return journey to Madras; getting accommodation in the connecting train at Villupuram is always a gamble.¹ There are three trains all near about midnight and one has to take a chance. It is very seldom that you get seats in the first train. Besides, you are a party of five and that makes it extremely difficult." I said I had no worry as Bhagavan would take good care of us. He said, "let us

have a bet on this", and we decided to make it a crucial test.

On the return journey, Mr. Venkatarathnam saw us off at Tiruvannamalai station where comfortable accommodation in a first-class compartment was secured for us. He also sent a peon to accompany us by train to Villupuram junction with the twofold objective of rendering us any assistance necessary until we were safely berthed in the connecting train at Villupuram, as also to check up on our bet how Bhagavan would come to our rescue to solve the usual difficulty expected at Villupuram junction.

We alighted at Villupuram and waited for the first Madras-bound train to arrive. We introduced ourselves to the Ticket Examiner and he promptly promised his assistance to find suitable berths for all of us. When the train steamed in, we walked past all the upper class compartments, the Ticket Examiner keeping count of the vacant berths available. There were only two berths vacant, in two different compartments and those too were upper berths, and we were five in all. We couldn't accept those berths. All that the Ticket Collector could do was to suggest that we try our luck with the next train. But I, who was all the while praying to Sri Bhagavan, did not give up hope. I could not reconcile myself to the idea that we would be left stranded. Thus, musing within myself, I felt like walking up to the front end of the train where there were a few closed bogies adjacent to the engine. No passenger coaches are generally connected there; but on that night, there was a brand-new looking first-class bogie next to the engine nicely done up and polished, and completely shuttered and closed being towed to Madras for some special purpose. On seeing it, I ran back

¹Nowadays there is a good direct bus service and it is not necessary to travel by night—(Editor)

along the platform and spoke to the Ticket Examiner about it. The sceptical Railway Official came up with me and was surprised to find a new coach with all the doors locked and windows closed. On opening it with a key, we found an exquisite compartment with all the seats empty. With his permission, all of us boarded the compartment, six berths to ourselves — specially,

reserved. I repeated aloud 'Om Namo Bhagavathe Sri Ramanaya! I have won the bet'. Need I have any doubt whether Sri Bhagavan would answer the silent prayers of his devotees? My faith in Bhagavan is just the same today as it was in those days, and there have been more and more of such instances to keep my faith unflagging.

THE GRACE OF SAI BABA

By KHUSHMUN ELAVIA

It was a day of great sorrow and yet ended up by being one of the happiest days of my life — the day on which the glory and grace of Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi first shone upon our family. I was only eleven at the time. My grandfather, whom I loved and idolised, was in the last stage of cancer. There was profuse internal bleeding and the doctors had given him up. The family were sitting around in grief, expecting the end within a few hours. As for me, I was sobbing aloud and wishing that I could die too. My grandfather was the person I most loved. I worshipped the very ground he trod on. While sobbing I kept on praying to God to have mercy on me and save him.

As I stood by the window in the evening, disconsolate and calling on God and all the saints to help us, I heard some one singing outside in a strangely powerful and moving way. The man who was singing stopped and continued his songs just under the window at which I stood, though I am sure he did not see me. His songs were all about the numerous miracles of the resplendent Sai Baba and how he never failed to come to the aid of those who sincerely turned to him and implored his help.

I had never heard of Sai Baba and this singer had never before come to our house,

but as I listened a ray of hope penetrated my mind. I eagerly began praying to this great one to show mercy on me too and not to abandon me at this time of tragedy. Within two hours the haemorrhage stopped and my grandfather took a turn for the better. When the doctors came next morning they were flabbergasted to see the change in him and sat there scratching their heads and discussing what could possibly have caused their prognostications to go wrong and how he could have recovered from such a hopeless condition. I smiled to myself because only I knew. Within a few days my grandfather was quite all right again and the cancer never troubled him again.

Many times after that I experienced the grace and favours of Sai Baba and I am eternally grateful to him, but it was that first miracle that won my undying gratitude. I found afterwards that I had often seen his picture, for it is in so many Bombay shops, but I had not known who it was. Of course, he had long since left his physical body — as far back as 1918, long before I was born — when this miracle occurred, but that did not matter. His grace and mercy are still showered on those who turn to him, and often on people like me who had never before heard of him.

THE MAHARSHI AND HIS BLESSINGS

By K. RAMACHANDRA,

Editor of '*The Religious Digest*', Ceylon.

There are some events which cannot be explained by physical causation. They simply have to be put down to Divine Omnipotence. There is the case, for instance, of Harry Edwards, the doyen of England's psychic healers, who was miraculously saved from a tragic motor accident when he was about thirty years old.

He stepped off a tram in the middle of the road and started to cross over to the pavement without looking for oncoming traffic. A lorry was approaching at high speed. He had no time to jump out of its way, nor had the driver time to swerve or apply the brake. He seemed certain to be crushed to death but suddenly an unseen hand raised him up and hurled him across the gap to the pavement to the astonishment of the lorry driver and the spectators. It was this miraculous saving of his life which prompted him to utilise the healing power latent in him for the service of mankind.

There have been many such cases of miraculous delivery from approaching death. I wish now to record two which occurred at places 700 miles apart at almost the identical moment on 14 April, 1950, the date of the Mahasamadhi of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Vallimalai Swami of Madras, an old and ardent devotee of Bhagavan, had received news of the latter's failing health and wished to be at his side for the Mahasamadhi. So he hurried to Egmore Station, Madras, to catch the first available train. Seeing it already at the platform, ready to start, and fearing that he would miss it if he crossed the overbridge, he dashed straight across the rail track. A shunting engine was coming towards him at high speed. In a fraction of a second an unseen hand lifted him over to the next track, which was unoccu-

pied. From there he climbed into a carriage just as the train was moving out. That was exactly at 7-45 p.m.

At the same time another miracle took place in front of our own house at Colpetty, Colombo. My wife and I had gone to Tiruvannamalai to have darshan of Bhagavan. The apparent reason for this was that Elizabeth, an English friend, who was then in Ceylon, was eager to have his darshan before taking her ship home on 25 April, but it was really through his Grace so that we should be there at the time of his Mahasamadhi. We arrived at Sri Ramanasramam on the 11th. On the first night of our stay there I had a vivid vision of Bhagavan's Mahasamadhi taking place at 7-45 p.m. on the 14th. On the strength of this I wrote to our son in Colombo that Bhagavan's condition was critical and that he should observe Ramana Day at our home shrine before 7-45 p.m. on Friday the 14th, notifying all Colombo devotees of its significance. After posting the letter I went to the hall where I received the glad news that Bhagavan's condition was greatly improved. I therefore rushed back to the post office to retrieve the letter, but the mail bag had already left. With renewed faith in my vision, I refrained from writing to cancel it.

As requested by me, our children organized a puja meeting at 6 p.m. on the 14th with the arati at 7-30. Many devotees attended in spite of the short notice, among them our neighbours Mr. and Mrs. A. and their little daughter of three. When the puja was finished this family were leaving our house to go home when their little daughter ran out into the road and a speeding car ran right over her. Before the horrified parents had time to cry out the child got up and ran to her mother quite uninjured, only her

clothes being soiled from the dust of the road. This was at exactly 7-45 p.m.

I will now describe a miraculous cure that happened in my own case after an accident at Tiruvannamalai. This was in January 1946 when I had gone there on pilgrimage with my family. We had a small cottage there but the Ashram authorities considered it too small for five persons and put us in a larger house. We went there after having darshan of Bhagavan. Leaving my family and the luggage on the verandah, I went round to the well at the back of the house to fetch some water. It was evening, already dark, and I did not know that the well had run dry and was about forty feet deep, with a rock bottom. As I was drawing the bucket up my foot slipped and I was about to fall in but some unseen power pulled me out and I was flung backwards into a ditch close to the wall. The force of the fall was such that I injured my spine and fell unconscious. Just then a friend who had heard of our arrival came with a torch and, finding me missing, joined my family in searching for me. They picked me up, still unconscious, and carried me into the house.

I came to in a few minutes but could neither stand erect nor lie flat on my back owing to the spinal injury. The pain was excruciating. Siddha, Ayurvedic, allopathic and homoeopathic treatments were all tried in turn but without effect. After I had been given electric treatment for three days, also without effect, my friends decided that I should be taken to hospital in Madras or Vellore but I refused. I replied that the greatest physician for me was Lord Arunachala in the human form of Sri Ramana and that I was not prepared to go anywhere else for treatment. I said that I preferred to die in the atmosphere of his sacred Presence. For five long weeks I remained day and night in a wicker easy chair, always in the same position, with my spine bent to reduce the pain. My power of endurance was getting exhausted and despair overcame me. My wife was taken to Bhagavan's hall to pray for me and also to the local temple for a special puja. On her return she fell asleep

exhausted and dreamed that a dark man waylaid her and was trying to snatch away her marriage thali with the gold chain when suddenly Bhagavan appeared and pushed him away, rescuing her from his clutches. This revived our hopes because it seemed that the dark man symbolised Death trying to make her a widow by snatching away her marriage token.

The following night my state became critical and, still in my coiled up position, I experienced death agony. Mrs. Osborne and an Indian lady were helping my wife look after me. Mrs. Osborne was sitting meditating. After a while she told the other lady to go to the Ashram and fetch the Parsi doctor who was treating me. He had come on a pilgrimage from Indore and was staying in a cottage in the Ashram precincts. No ladies were allowed in the Ashram after dark, so the lady, Ammani Ammal, was reluctant to go, but Mrs. Osborne induced her to. As she approached the meditation hall, where Bhagavan used to sleep at night she saw that there was a light there. This was remarkable as it was already half past one in the morning, so she approached the window and peeped in. To her amazement she saw two attendants applying ointment and massaging the back of the Maharshi. She at once perceived the connection between this and my suffering. Without being seen by any one at the Ashram, she rushed back to our house and reported what she had seen. She was in a state of great joy and excitement with tears streaming down her face. All three of us were caught up in her mood. I rose from my chair and stood erect. I felt the straightening of my spine. The three ladies helped me to my bed which had been unused for five weeks, and for the first time since the accident I slept.

The following day I was able to walk with assistance to Bhagavan's presence and make my grateful salutations to him. It was something like a rebirth and I have had no serious illness since then. His blessings continue to flow although we are denied his physical presence.

A few years later I came across the writings of Sri Yogananda Paramahansa and his exposition of 'metaphysically induced illness' gave me a clearer understanding of such wonderful happenings. I quote a passage below.

"The metaphysical method of physical transfer of disease is known to highly advanced Yogis. A strong man can assist a weaker one by helping him to carry his heavy load; a spiritual superman is able to minimise his disciples' physical or mental bur-

dens by sharing the karma of their past actions. Just as a rich man loses some money when he pays off a large debt for a prodigal son, who is thus saved from the dire consequences of his folly, so a Master willingly sacrifices a portion of his bodily wealth to lighten the misery of his disciples."

Since my own experience, which I have just told, I have also been privileged to witness the case of an esteemed friend helped by the Grace of his own Master, to whom I too was devoted.

THE BEGINNING OF A RAMANA MANTRA

By T. K. S.

Bhagavan never gave a mantra unsolicited; when asked he sometimes approved of the use of one. He sometimes allowed the name 'Ramana' to be used as a mantra, sometimes the single syllable 'I'; however he was insistent that the question: "Who am I?" is not a mantra.

The mantra 'Om namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya' fascinated me greatly in my early days. It so delighted me that I constantly saw Sri Krishna (Vasudeva) in my mind's eye. I had a premonition¹ that this body of mine would pass away in its fortieth year and I wanted to have a vision of the Lord before that time. I fasted and practised devotion to Krishna Vasudeva incessantly. I took great delight in reading the Bhagavad Gita and the Bhagavata. Then when I read in the Gita "I regard the Jnani as my own Self" I was overjoyed. I reflected: "When I have here Bhagavan Sri Ramana who is Vasudeva's own Self, why should I worship Vasudeva separately?"

All this was in my early days before settling down at Sri Bhagavan's Ashram. I wanted one mantra, one scripture and one form of worship, so that there might be no conflict of loyalties. Sri Ramana Paramatma was obviously the God to worship; his

writings were the gospel, and as for the mantra, it struck me that 'Om namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya' was an exact parallel of the one I had used formerly. I counted the letters and found that it also contained twelve Sanskrit letters. I told Bhagavan and he gave his approval.

Intellectuals may laugh at this and ask why I needed a mantra when the Ocean of Bliss was there before me. I confess that I was drawn to the traditional method of bhakti practice. Bhagavan has revealed his true nature as the All-Witness, yet there is also the saying that Advaita must be only in the attitude of mind and never in outer action.

That is how this mantra first came to be approved.

¹ which proved unjustified. He passed away at the age of 68. See 'Ashram Bulletin' of our April, 1965 issue.

CLIMBING ARUNACHALA

By SATYANARAYAN TANDON

When I was at the Ashram in April 1964 a desire to climb to the top of Arunachala arose in me ; but as my wife was suffering from arthritis and taking injections every second day it did not seem possible. I could not leave her alone for the day, especially as she spoke neither Tamil nor English. However the following night Bhagavan appeared to me in a dream and reminded me to climb to the top.

I still could not decide, but a few days later my wife herself urged me to, saying that she would wait at the Ashram till I got back. I told Sundaresh Iyer and, with the help of the postmaster, Raja Aiyar, he arranged for two people to go with me early next morning.

We set out at about 5 on the morning of April 7th and reached Skandashram by about 5.30. It was about 8.30 when we got to the peak after climbing over rocks, stony paths and dry water courses. At several places I had to sit and rest for some minutes, as the climb had exhausted me. Though I had climbed mountains of ten and twelve thousand feet in my youth, at 63 I found even Arunachala's two thousand feet tiring. Once or twice I felt tempted to bow down respectfully to the Lord at the summit from where I stood and return ; but when I gazed up in reverence I saw Bhagavan standing on the summit, smiling as if to encourage me not to lose heart but to climb. The last bit was especially exhausting and when I at last reached the peak I was gasping like a buffalo yoked to a heavy load. All through the climb I had been inwardly chanting Arunachala-Siva, but at that moment the chanting spontaneously stopped.

The oval shaped rock by the side of which I stood was stained black from the melted ghee of the beacon fire lit there annually on Kartikai Deepam Day. Although the sun was by now well up in the sky, a cool and pleasant breeze was blowing.

Merged in the bliss of sacred Arunachala, I suddenly felt that a crevice had opened before me and I sank down into it, how far I did not know. After some time I found myself back on the summit with nothing on but a loincloth, and before me stood Bhagavan. He turned and walked westward, and I after him. How he could walk from summit to summit as though over a smooth surface and I follow him was a mystery to me, and yet so it was.

While thus walking I suddenly saw, instead of Bhagavan, a huge column of some milky-white substance rising up before me. I walked up to it and became merged in it, losing my identity.

When the sun had risen higher and the guides were anxious to return we started back. The return was more tiring than the ascent. I could not walk barefoot as the stones had now become too hot in the fierce sun, and with shoes on I slipped on the smooth rocks. I got back to Skandashram at about noon but was too exhausted to undertake the further short walk to the Ashram, so I rested there for about three hours, arriving back at the Ashram at about four in the afternoon ; and there I found my wife and Sri Sundaresh Iyer waiting anxiously for me.

I treasure this experience as a wonderful manifestation of Bhagavan's Grace.

THE POWER OF SHAKTIPATA

By SWAMI MUKTANANDA

We already carried an article about Swami Nityananda in our issue of April 1965; however the following article, by a Swami whom many regard as his successor, is so much in keeping with the theme of the present issue that we offer no apologies for including this also.

This world, this universe, this Brahmanda, described variedly as real and existent, unreal and non-existent, and even paradoxically as both real and unreal, existent and non-existent, teases man out of thought and remains a question of questions. What indeed is this macrocosm? The six systems of Indian philosophy expound it differently. The Vedanta designates it as an unsubstantial pageant and an optical illusion on the analogy of a rope mistaken for a serpent. Modern science takes it as materially composed of atoms and electrons. Each one thus perceives the world from his own circumscribed view and projects its image to suit his limited perception.

Whatever it is, the world is undoubtedly a miracle of a phenomenon. However incomprehensible it may appear, there is no gainsaying the truth that its Creator has fashioned it with flawless artistry and indescribable efficiency. It needs no more than a modicum of thought to ask whence there could have been light and heat without the sun; coolness of the night without the moon; life without wind; quenching of thirst without water; the very existence of beings without the earth's fertility sprouting into corn, fruits, flowers, vegetation and medicinal plants. Where would beauty be found if not in the majestic mountains, sparkling streams, ever-flowing rivers, shady trees, lovely creepers, fragrant flowers, and the ever-shifting kaleidoscope of colours over earth and heaven? Birds and beasts add as much to this beauty as the landscape. All this lends its peculiar charm, strikes terror and evokes a sense of unspeakable awe and grandeur in its totality. This world of satva, rajas, tamas, instinct



Swami Nityananda

with sat, chit, ananda, though one, stands exposed in a bewildering variety of forms. Even as an artist with a flourish of brush conjures up his visions on a canvas, God the Supreme Artist brought into being this universe, which strikes one as strange, variegated, friendly and unfriendly at the same time, though it is nothing but a multiple projection of His divinity.

Even among men there is an intriguing and surprizing variety. There is nothing wasted in the economy of heaven. Everything that is has a part to play in the day to day world. The business of the world goes on. Time and again, however, saints

Articles about Swamis and Gurus are written for us by their disciples. We do not presume to pass judgment on the opinions of the author.

and enlightened ones appear in our midst to give a new sense of direction and purposefulness. The tenor of their life is apparently outlandish, but they are the embodiment of the divine, from whom the sick in body and mind derive a full measure of peace, solace and content. Such a divine embodiment descended on Ganeshpuri to fulfil an extraordinary mission of mercy. Innumerable devotees know him as Bhagavan Sri Nityananda.

There is nothing on record to show where Gurudeva was born or brought up or where he realized the Self. There is no clue to his geneology or family background. Nor is this strictly necessary. What is material is not the source of rivers or the geneology of saints, but their impact and achievement. The dear to the Lord, according to Shrimad Bhagavata, are above the mundane distinctions of birth, caste or community. Gurudeva belonged to this category. Beyond doubt, he was a self-realized one from birth, whose impact transcended his physical presence and has continued unabated even today after his physical demise.

Sri Gurudeva was always in a state of unruffled perennial bliss and his face was ever adorned with a beatific smile. His luminous loud laughter in this state still rings in the ears of those who were privileged to hear it. Bhagavan Sri Nityananda was literally ever-joyful, which induced people to address him as such. From his childhood, it is reported, he used to have his skull clean-shaven and sometimes donned the orange-tinted robes of a sannyasin till he came to Vajreshwari, which probably suggests that he was a spiritually ordained sannyasin of the 'nandapadma' category.

It is believed that Sri Gurudeva, having revealed himself in his youth some fifty years ago in the South, travelled through Kerala, Bantwal, Mangalore, Kaup, Mulki, Udipi, Pudubidri, Kanhangad, Gokarn, on foot, relieving incidentally a variety of people of their illness, misery, anxiety and poverty. His field of peregrination also extended over forests and valleys through which he travelled with lightning speed. He never stayed

anywhere for long and accepted food and water only, if offered, since he never felt their want. Sometimes pestered by crowds clamouring for miracles, he shunned them by swiftly moving to a different spot, sometimes even perching himself on a tree and casually throwing down leaves which served as panacea to the ailing.

Once, mistaken as a vagrant, Sri Gurudeva, it is said, was put behind the bars of a prison by a hot-headed Government official who was then amazed at seeing his prisoner both inside and outside the jail at the same time. The erring official's repentance followed and so did the immediate release of his extraordinary prisoner! Sri Gurudeva sometimes travelled by railroad. When asked to show a ticket, he could produce thousands of them from his loin-cloth. A story which has gained wide currency, being applied to many sadhus, actually happened with him. A stern railway guard put him off a train for having no ticket. He sat quietly by the side of the line, but the engine refused to start up. A murmuring arose among the passengers that it was because the guard had committed sacrilege. Time passed. Nothing could be done. Finally, to appease the people, the guard reinstated the sadhu and immediately the engine started up. When he willed, he distributed sweets to thousands and no one had the faintest notion where they came from. Certain people have testified to their having seen him walking on the waters of the Pavanje river. Sri Gurudeva had his mortal share of ignorant people's calumny, jealousy and harrassment. A necromancer named Appaya once offered Gurudeva tobacco surreptitiously mixed with poison. Gurudeva swallowed it and it so happened that the necromancer began writhing with abdominal pain and paid the penalty of sacrilege with his immediate death. On another occasion, a certain Malabari caught hold of Gurudeva, tied his hands and legs, sprinkled rock oil on him and set him on fire. Once again, it was the malicious Malabari who began to burn and died.

These miracles happened and yet Sri Gurudeva was no miracle-monger. This was the period when he had achieved complete

identity with Brahman. He visualized the Supreme in himself as in all others without any distinction. Having merged himself with the omnipotent Supreme, anything was at his command and so it was that miracles, big and small, spontaneously issued from him without a taint of self-interest. The learned seers have listed three types of siddhis—(1) unclean siddhi, (2) mantra-siddhi and (3) yogasiddhi. The first, whose power is acquired through unholy rites, mantras or substance, is rendered ineffective when the possessor of that power is purified and cleansed, since his efficacy depends on his uncleanness. This power, which is malevolent and destructive, is incapable of doing good to anyone. The second is acquired through incantations addressed to a chosen deity. Those who have acquired this power can produce at will any object — fruits, flowers, articles of gold and silver on the palm of their hands, or move objects from one place to another. Such conjurations and miracles impress people, but degenerate into ephemeral exhibitionism when they are consciously manoeuvred. The third is acquired through a rigorous discipline of eightfold Yoga and full self-control and is scientifically valid (as well as actually feasible). There is however another called Mahasiddhi which stands head and shoulders above the aforesaid three, and is derived through a complete identification with the Supreme. One merged with God becomes God, even as a drop of water merged with the ocean acquires the qualities of the ocean through its identification. To quote "Shivashakti", one merged with God acquires all the omnipotence of God when the full-realization of integration dawns upon him, leaving then no need for incantations, austerities, rites or efforts for the acquisition of this supreme power. Those who are endowed with this power are not even conscious that they possess it and yet it has a strong impact. Such supreme power was with Bhagavan Nityananda.

After some years' stay in the South, Sri Gurudeva set out on a pilgrimage and covered practically the entire length and breadth of India on foot. He himself sometimes used

to give vivid descriptions of the places he had visited. Sri Gurudeva practised stern austerities in the Himalayas, even staying in a tree for six years. Sri Gurudeva was an embodiment of the highest bliss and divine consciousness and nothing is impossible to such souls.

When, after years of peregrination, Sri Gurudeva finally settled down at Ganeshpuri near Vajreshwari outside Bombay, the question naturally arises why, of all the places, he selected this one. Possibly the reason was that Ganeshpuri had been a sanctified spot for centuries and Sri Gurudeva chose it as Lord Vishnu chose Vaikuntha and Lord Shiva did Kailas. Here in this sanctified spot is the Mandagni mountain, the sacred river Tejasa, the ancient temple of goddess Vajreshwari as also the woods filled with fruits and flowers, an oasis of natural beauty, and the famous hot springs. Here Vashistha had once performed a big sacrifice and the saints practised penance. So Gurudeva settled down in Ganeshpuri and put it on the map of the spiritual world.

The physical features of Sri Gurudeva had the sheen of a dusky jewel. His forehead was high and broad with thick arched eye-brows over his big round eyes, from which flowed an incessant stream of pure love. He was generally seated in a spacious armchair with a quiescent mind and a gently smiling face—a sight once seen, always indelibly impressed on his visitors' mind.

Sri Gurudeva loved solitude. He was eminently free from desire of any sort related to himself. Sri Gurudeva came to Vajreshwari with only a loin-cloth and lived with it to the end of his earthly days. His life was extremely simple. He took his bath before dawn and ate very little. Indeed to be simple is to be great and this simplicity of Sri Gurudeva was one more indication of his greatness.

Sri Gurudeva rarely spoke, but on being questioned, he would sometimes expound the most abstruse philosophy in a few simple words that went home. He had a good working knowledge of several languages such as

English, Hindi, Marathi, Kannada, Telugu, Tamil and Malayalam, even throwing in an occasional Sanskrit quotation in the course of his conversation. He was a wideawake picture of perfect peace through the day and never slept through the night. Such exalted souls, on scriptural authority, neither sleep nor dream, being always in a state of highest bliss, freed from desires and fears, illusions and expectations of every sort. The Mandukya Upanishad describes this supraconscious state as indescribable, intangible, undemonstrable, beyond thought and reason — peaceful, blissful and unique. This is being one with Atma, which alone is worth knowing and striving for.

Sri Gurudeva was one with God. To be in his presence was to be aware of God. All the miseries and cares of the world were imperceptibly liquidated at his sight. The devotees addressed him lovingly as "Baba" and they were never tired of standing in an almost interminable queue for hours in heat or shower for the privilege of having his darshan. Whoever had a glimpse of him had a feeling that Baba was his and knew all his difficulties. Baba was to the devotees what Sri Krishna was to the gopis, each gopi feeling that the Lord was having the Rasalila only with her. Ganeshpuri had come to be a shrine of which Sri Gurudeva was the Lord. His presence here was solely for the good of his loving devotees. He was the healer of all their wounds. He protected in every way his devotees, who flocked to him with simple love and faith. All doubts were resolved, all knots untied and a deep-seated sense of peace settled down on his devotees at a glance. As the Mundakopanishad affirms, all doubts and conflicts disappear, all consequences of actions — good or bad — are wiped out at the realization of the Supreme.

Those who had questions to ask were rendered mute in Gurudeva's august presence. Sometimes the question was answered even before it was asked through a symbolic gesture or a word from Gurudeva. Gurudeva spoke little, but whatever little he said was charged with a deep significance, which served the listener as food for deepest

thought. Gurudeva mostly preferred to communicate with his eyes. Sometimes however he made loving inquiries after the devotees' comforts and they were touched by this solicitude. Gurudeva sometimes used to give sweets or fruits to his devotees, who considered themselves the most blessed on earth for being considered worthy of such gifts. Sri Sukhadeva in Shrimad Bhagavat said that it is very difficult to have a glimpse of great souls and to receive tokens of favour from them. Such 'prasada' does away with all difficulties and miseries. The devotees from cities forgot all their worldly cares and worries on arriving at Ganeshpuri. They generally arrived here on weekends and returned to their work with Grace enough to sustain them for the next week. Though always residing in his quarters at "Kailas Nivas", Gurudeva's presence was felt all over. He himself used to say, "Be calm; I am everywhere". Sri Gurudeva always thought of his devotees far and near. The poor natives of Ganeshpuri and its surroundings never lacked food or clothing in his (Baba's) spiritual regime. Sometimes Gurudeva used to move among the children and talk to them joyously. He loved children, whom he considered representatives of God and offered them sweets and other gifts.

Innumerable people came to Gurudeva with all sorts of offerings. The scriptures have said that a god, guru, king and child should never be approached without offerings. There were heaps of gifts and offerings — sweets, fruits, biscuits, bales of cloth, clothes, rugs, blankets and a thousand things — around Gurudeva. Did Gurudeva need them? He was contented only with his loincloth and distributed these gifts among the needy.

Whoever came to Gurudeva sat down after obeisance in his own way. Men of modern sophistication sometimes eye this ritual critically, which is symptomatic of their ignorance and immaturity. As a matter of fact there is nothing humiliating or derogatory to one's self-esteem in bowing down before the Gurus. The seers have seen that there flows a divine spiritual energy from

the great souls which is transmitted through contact. Even the great Lord Rama touched the feet of sages and preceptors. The great ones bowing to the great only add to their own greatness. Greeting one another is more than a formality; it is a means of establishing a mutual rapport. When someone told Gurudeva, "I bow to you", Gurudeva used to retort that he was bowing not to him but only to Brahman, whose manifestations we all are.

The direct realization of spiritual and philosophical truths has the effect of tranquillising the whole being of a man. The whole material world is then nothing for him and there is nothing left for him to do in a worldly way. To talk about the meaningless is doubly meaningless. It was for this that Gurudeva had long spells of silence, but even his silence was more eloquent than words. It was the irresistible charm of this silence and self-possession that quietened even the most garrulous. The Rig Veda maintains that those who obey earn the right to command. Accordingly, Sri Gurudeva instructed others to be what he was in a state of mind devoid of word or thought. There is the well-known story of Kakabhushandi, who constantly iterated the name of Rama, which in the process generated such an atmosphere around him that all who approached it came within its magnetic field. There was such an atmosphere around Sri Gurudeva, who was perpetually in a state of perennial bliss, which had an immediate impact on all those who approached him.

There are no words to describe Sri Gurudeva's powerful impact. He could be described only if taken as one of us, which he was not. He was an embodied pure soul integrated with the Supreme mover of all that moves. The self-realized seers declare this universe full of infinite variety to be merely the play of the Supreme Lord. The poets have likened God to an actor playing many parts, since He reveals himself in a diversity of forms, though one in reality. The permutations and combinations of Maya and the Maya itself are of His making. He is visible though invisible, active though

apparently inactive. He receives gifts though He is the giver, of all gifts. The whole universe is permeated by Him. Through Him is the creation and evolution of this entire universe. Sri Gurudeva always said that he was present everywhere. Once, when a photographer sought his permission to photograph him, Sri Gurudeva told him rather to photograph the universe, since his identification was so complete that there was nothing unrelated with him in the whole universe. At all hours and in all conditions he was in a state of supreme bliss. He conducted himself in such a way as to suggest that the whole world was the object of his love and the theatre of his operation. Being above likes and dislikes, he rejected nothing because it was bad nor accepted anything because it was good. So completely detached was he that he saw not though he saw; he heard not though he heard; he spoke not though he spoke. He was neither a doer nor an enjoyer; neither a receiver nor a giver.

The ways of saints are inscrutable. Tukaram has said that one has to live like a fish in water to know how a fish could sleep in water. Likewise, one has to be something of a Mahatma to understand the Mahatma. The attempt to explain or pass a verdict on them is childish, indicative of neither experience nor erudition, like the attempt to describe the Taj Mahal with the help of a picture post-card. Some people have wondered why Sri Gurudeva did not set out to serve the poor and the ignorant instead of confining himself within the four walls of his Ashram. This is sheer misunderstanding. The sun and the moon and the holy Ganges do not go out of their way to serve anybody, and yet who could question the amount of good they do, settled in their own place? The impact of Sri Gurudeva's benevolence on the exterior world was both direct and indirect. It is testified to by those who have felt a deep calm and had all their knots untied at his mere glance. Some came to scoff and remained to pray. Others left infinitely more fortified than ever with inner strength. As the sun peeps out of the East, birds begin to warble, but the owl goes

blind; holy men come to offer their morning ablutions, but thieves and prowlers take to their heels; the snow begins to melt but the clay gets hardened.

Sri Gurudeva was apparently no different from the rest of mankind. There was visibly no give and take between him and his devotees, since for him there was nothing to give in material terms. Yet, he had one thing to give without stint or measure — namely, his grace followed by a deep sense of peace. He was himself a fountain of peace and joy. He was the 'Paramananda' of the Upanishads; the dear Lord of the devout Vaishnavas; the object of the meditation of the Yogis; the Brahmananda of the philosophers and the Chidananda of the Vedas. His unperturbed soul encased in a mortal frame flowed out in a ceaseless stream of joy, love and peace. "The whole world", said Gurudeva, "is my home."

There are yogis and yogis and yet their work is largely identical despite differences. Sri Gurudeva mostly preferred not to talk. He did not preach or lecture and yet his few words or speechless communication were more effective than long-winded perorations.

The inexorable law of Karma works itself out in poverty, disease, ignorance with some and otherwise with others. Bhartruhari has described this world as insufferable. Every man has his tale of woe to tell, no matter how healthy and wealthy he is. Man is ever in quest of happiness, which eludes him, and each renewed attempt at happiness only adds to his unhappiness. Sri Gurudeva was a source of strength and solace to these men, whom he urged to know themselves and realize God as the only royal road to lasting happiness.

Each soul in this world is an inalienable part of the Supreme Soul and is forever seeking reunion with God. All arts and sciences are a means of realizing this eventuality. Happiness and joy are dear as life to everyone. The scriptures describe the world as full of insatiable cravings and longings. Marriage, wife, children, social status, means of recreation are all attempts to gra-

tify them. The all-knowing Rishis have maintained that no lasting peace can ensue from the pursuit of worldly happiness. The Bhagavad Gita has said that this world is a vast abode of suffering, where a fleeting sense of happiness is at best a brief interlude. In the state of things as they are there is no gratification. The Vedas see all misery rooted in ignorance. Man is miserable because he does not know his own self fully. If men were to look within themselves, they would soon discover that there is within them a source of perennial happiness known as Atmasukha which is absolute and infinite. All other joys of the world are contained in that supreme happiness. God in his mercy reveals Himself time and again in the form of self-realized Mahatmas to lead men towards the true goal of this happiness. The holy Bhagavata says that men are rewarded with a glimpse of such self-luminous souls only after an accumulated store of merit through a series of births. Such self-realized souls are indeed difficult to come by. But when the world is sorely afflicted with sin and misery, such self-realized souls descend on the earth and effectively rehabilitate man's confidence in truth and righteousness. Bhagavan Shri Nityananda descended on Ganeshpuri with such a mission and led men towards truth and righteousness.

The three channels of experience and enjoyment in the day to day world are wakefulness, dream and deep sleep. But there is a fourth one, called "Turiya" which is extremely rare. In this state there is an indefinable experience of supreme bliss than which there is no higher state of happiness. The scriptures designate this state variedly as Vaikuntha, Kailas, Vishnupada and Paramapada. The highest objective for which man has been striving since birth is realized here. The dormant capacity to reach this goal is awakened and activated through Guru's grace. As the "Shivasutra" says, God comes down in the form of a guru to lead men to this elevated state through the guru, who transforms a 'jiva' into 'Shiva' and a 'nara' into Narayana. Sri Gurudeva Nityananda belonged to this category.

Sri Gurudeva had the divine power of performing 'Shaktipata' or transmission of spiritual energy. The right type of recipient then began to feel differently and started muttering "I am Brahma", "I am Shiva", "I am He" the moment his static or dormant Kundalini was aroused. Without guru's grace, there is no 'Shaktipata', which is a wonderful and mysterious process wherein the Guru communicates his own spiritual energy to the disciple. 'Shaktipata' is a great science. In 'Shivagama' and 'Shaivatantra' there is an elaborate description of this spiritual process. A perfect guru awakens the Kundalini Shakti through 'Shaktipata'. This Kundalini Shakti which is no different from Divine Consciousness or 'Chiti Shakti' is another name for the divine power which is operating universally. 'Chiti' is an independent power which is unity manifested as diversity and diversity as unity. Though one in essence, it projects itself in different forms. The highest attainments of Yogis, Jnanis, devotees, poets, princes, warriors are varied manifestations and projections of Kundalini or Chiti Shakti, which is omnipotent and invincible. One of its names is 'Shiva', the other is 'Shakti' the difference in nomenclature being merely nominal. Sri Gurudeva Nityananda had with him, beyond question, infinite wonders of this divine 'Chiti Shakti'.

Things began to happen to the disciple whose Kundalini was awakened and activated by Gurudeva. Leaving all details

aside, it is enough at the moment to say that the Kundalini Shakti lies within the human body at the base of the spinal column in the Muladhara Chakra, coiled in three circles and a half in serpentine fashion. No sooner is it awakened than there is a new efflorescence or effluence of vitality all through the body and the process of inner purification sets in. At the outset, there is an overwhelming feeling of sleepiness, tremor, perspiration and something resembling electric shocks. A state of mental poise comes over the disciple and he also sees visions of saints, deities and heavens. Different kinds of lights are seen, many kinds of sounds heard in the state of deep meditation. In the Sushumna nerve from the Muladhara at the base of the spinal column to the Sahasrara in the crown of the head are situated the six chakras or nerve centres, which begin to be cleansed as the Kundalini is awakened. Everything then appears in a new light and the breathing in and out is balanced in a perfect equilibrium. With this comes untying of all inner knots and the end of all illusions. All doubts and conflicts are set at rest and the spirit is in tune with eternity. With the end of all desires comes the supreme sense of release from all bondages. All this awakening comes only through Guru's grace. Guru's gifts are endless and imperishable. Of such divine power was our Gurudeva Nityanandaji. A thousand salutations to him — our immortal Gurudeva!

PRESENCE

People searching for "the Self" are usually looking for "an entity that isn't an entity"—instead of quite simply looking for what is looking. What is looking is what "they" are looking for all the time.

Neither could ever be "found", but the latter at least is present.

— WEI WU WEI

The Miracles of . . .

. . . . TIRUPATI VENKATARAMANA

(Sri Venkateswara, Lord of the Seven Hills)

By N. N. RAJAN

This Kali-yuga or spiritually dark age is noted for disregard of dharma and for every kind of sin and delinquency. The necessity for divine intervention to rescue men from the abyss is more than ever felt at this time. This holy land of Bharata abounds in places of pilgrimage sanctified by God in one or another form, and there is no more effective way of winning the Grace of God than by visiting them and worshipping the Lord. A pilgrimage to a holy place symbolises the union of the soul with God, which is the ultimate aim of man.

Tirupati is one of the most famous of all such holy places. What Jerusalem is to the Christians, Tirupati is to the Hindus. There is a mass of significant legend woven around it. The Lord Venkateswara (known also as Balaji to north Indians) in his infinite mercy took up his abode there for the salvation of men. Stationed on this hill-shrine he summons men to seek refuge at his feet. Many saints and devotees have been drawn here in the past, and on reaching the shrine have danced in ecstasy and poured forth their praises in extempore hymns.

Legend has it that the Lord Vishnu, taking the form of a white boar during the cosmic dissolution, dived into the waters and rescued the submerged earth from the wicked demon Hiranyaksha, whom he slew. Having reinstated the earth, he decided to abide at this place on it to establish dharma. The sacred water in which he appeared, near to the temple on the hill, is called Swami Pushkarani. Pilgrims bathe there before entering the temple, thereby washing away their sins and gaining merit. The image of Vishnu as

a White Boar is still to be seen in the Audi Varahasami temple near the tank.

Lord Venkateswara is appropriately known as "Kaliyuga Varadan", the Giver of Boons in Kali Yuga. Before this yuga started he declared to his Consort Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth, "In the Dark Age people will not hesitate to commit all manner of sins. As a result they will fall victim to all kinds of sickness and will suffer greatly. This will turn them to God and make them long for Him. So I will appear to them in dreams and summon them to these hills with votive offerings of money and jewellery and other precious things. If they fail to make the pilgrimage here and to surrender the offerings I shall collect these from them with interest and distribute the wealth among virtuous devotees and among the needy. Even a trivial offering at this place will be immensely productive in wealth and good fortune. All boons will be granted to those who worship us at this place with true devotion." And indeed, pious Hindus have found from long experience that prayers made to Sri Venkateswara at this place are answered. They have found also that retribution overtakes those who do not honour their vows, and therefore the Lord is known as Vatti-Kadavul, the collector of interest.

Such is the concourse of devotees that offerings pour in to the measure of ten or fifteen lakhs of rupees a month — more than in any other shrine in India. The Devasthanam or administration is the richest of its kind in India and maintains a university, oriental college, high schools, hospitals, poor homes and other institutions.

We have to cross six hills before coming to the seventh, on which the temple stands. These hills have the form of a serpent and are identified by legend with the Divine Serpent Audishesha. The more orthodox pilgrims make the journey on foot, ending with the seven mile path up to the crest of the hill, which is 2,800 feet high. It is a truly moving sight to see the never-ending multitude of pilgrims moving slowly along this path, chanting and calling on the Name of God as they go. Although it is a Vaishnavite shrine Saivites are no less in evidence there.

No pilgrimage to Sri Venkateswara is wasted. Even the accumulated sins of many years are wiped out by a visit here. People suffering from longstanding chronic diseases or who have been given up as incurable by the doctors are miraculously cured here when they take the vows and have darshan of the Lord. Only they must have unswerving faith and true sincerity. On the other hand people who make their offerings grudgingly are often penalised by unexpected loss of money and valuables or by some new misfortune. Especially does this happen with people who donate a smaller amount than they had vowed. Cases are not lack-

ing where amounts that they have vowed and kept back have simply disappeared. Devotion and sincerity are essential.

Many people don the saffron robe of a sannyasin for making this pilgrimage. Many also, men, women and children, make the symbolical vow of shaving their heads, renouncing the hair which symbolises their worldly attributes. Indeed, if one sees a party of villagers with shaven heads travelling in South India one can be pretty sure that they are returning from this pilgrimage.

Once I heard a long-standing devotee of Sri Ramana Maharshi who had just returned from Tirupati to Sri Ramanashram speaking in glowing terms of his darshan of Lord Venkataramana and the Prasadam he had received, and Bhagavan¹ said: "How could it be otherwise when the Lord Himself has chosen to remain in that lofty abode?" What more is needed to confirm the greatness of this holy place when Bhagavan, the Sage without a peer, has himself endorsed it?

¹ Lord Venkataramana is the family deity of Bhagavan's ancestors. In fact, Bhagavan was named after the Lord. (Editor)

. . . SPIRITUAL HEALING

By IRMGARD GEORGE SCHULTZ

Even today people ask whether they can believe the miracles of healing recorded in the Bible. Why shouldn't they, when similar ones are performed now also. For centuries Christ's legacy of spiritual healing was lost. One of the pioneers of its recovery in the 19th Century was Franz Mesmer, although it was probably rather magnetic than spiritual healing that he was using. Then a simple man of the name of Quimby made history by healing that very remarkable American woman Mary Baker Eddy. She it was who developed a system of spiritual healing with a philosophical basis and so became the founder of Christian Science. She taught that, since man was made in the likeness of God, sickness must be an error or illu-

sion. Also, quite uncompromisingly, she declared that: "Matter is unreal and temporary; Spirit is real and eternal." Illness was to be cured (or the illusion of illness dissipated) by refusing to admit its reality. Christian Science was much ridiculed but it spread widely for the simple reason that its cures were so often successful.

In our times it is already far more easy to hold that the material world is an illusion; in fact it might even be called scientific orthodoxy. What appears to be matter has been discovered to be mere energy. As Brown Landone writes in 'Unknown Powers': we look at railway lines and they seem to converge in the distance — an illusion of our senses. The sky seems to touch the

horizon — another illusion. Colours too : they have no reality. Light is only vibration transformed into colour by the retina of our eye. Red is the lowest vibration to be perceived by the human eye and violet the fastest. We can only see in the range of 400 to 700 trillion vibrations per second, that is from red to violet, but there are others lower than red and faster than violet that we can't see, the infra-red and ultra-violet. It is similar with our hearing. The highest tone that we can hear vibrates only 26,000 times a second, but bats can hear vibrations of up to 50,000 and ants up to 500,000.

So our limited senses lead us from illusion to illusion. Christian Science teaches that if we can regard our bodily infirmities also as an illusion they disappear. It is not easy but with the help of a guide it can be done ; and it has often been found to work.

Spiritual healing has spread enormously today and there are few of its practitioners, who go to the full theoretical limits of Christian Science. Perhaps most of them leave aside the theoretical question of reality and concentrate simply on the healing power of thought or prayer. They simply demonstrate that, whatever one may think of the reality or otherwise of the physical body, psychic or spiritual force, whichever they may use, can in fact heal its ailments.

But the highest art of healing is the transformation of the mind of the patient so that he can heal himself by surrendering to the one healing power, which is what we call God. The two most uncompromising modern healers, both in theory and practice, in their insistence on the One Reality of God are the late Joel Goldsmith and Dr. Taniguchi of Japan. Both of them have healed thousands of patients and have published their teachings and experiences in books. Dr. Taniguchi says in one of these : "We have to recognize the reality behind the world of illusion. When we meditate on Truth, the consequences of our inner progress appear in our outer life, as the outer world is but the shadow of our inner world. All outer appearance is but the reflected image of the

inner being. Only God and His manifestation is reality. Man is the child of God — not a perishable material being but a perfect spiritual one."¹

Therefore our physical condition can be influenced and transformed by the Spirit. That means that spiritual healing is a natural process. The method is meditation. Man can master his life by awakening to absolute Reality, overcoming the illusion of his senses and gaining thereby harmony, health and abundance. On this basis Dr. Taniguchi founded the movement Seicho-No-Le, meaning 'Home of Infinite Life, Love, Wisdom and Abundance'. This movement differs from those that look upon evil as a reality to be fought, rising instead to the level of pure Spirit, the One Power, above the polarity of good and evil.

This same insistence that evil has no reality is to be found in the teaching of Joel Goldsmith and the 'Infinite Way' groups that he founded. He insisted always on the One Power, the One Reality, above the apparent conflict of the two powers of good and evil. By rising to the level of the One Power, he asserted, we find both evil and the need to fight it to be an illusion, and sickness disappears like a mirage.

"Never try to cut away rheumatism, cancer or consumption like branches of a tree, nor old age. Do not try to transform the world of appearances. Go back ! Recognize that in reality God is your being and that suffering is caused by your belief in two powers. If you fight against one error and overcome it, ten others arise and take its place. The cause of human discord has to be extinguished. And, what is the cause ? This formation of a nothingness, this so-called mortal mind that has no power but for those that constantly fight against evil."

How can one overcome evil or sickness without recognizing or fighting it ? Goldsmith explains : "The arm against error — our attack and our defence — is something neither physical nor psychical, neither deeds nor words nor thoughts — it is but the

¹ *Truth of Life* by Dr. Taniguchi.

awareness of God." Divine harmony will unfold itself in the degree of our ability to be a silent spectator without any desire or activity, with no wish but the Presence of God, the One Power. "Our meditation has only to do with the realization of a spiritual presence." He explains that "Only the recognition of God's Grace is necessary to restore harmony, only the knowledge of the One Power."²

As I have said above, not all healers take this uncompromising attitude. There are those who recognize the existence of sickness and use the power of prayer or the power of Christ's Name to remove it. Perhaps indeed they are the majority. A description of this kind of healing was given by G. H. Gedge, himself an eminent spiritual healer, in his article in the January 1964 issue of *The Mountain Path*.

But we hear of failures too. Why? Whose fault is it? An example will make this clear. Can we enter a room fastened from within? The person inside has to open it for us. In the same way the patient has to open his consciousness to the healing

power. One who is always thinking of his illness, wallowing in it, opposing the Truth, even though unconsciously, keeps his mind closed. It is the task of the healer to help him open his consciousness to the liberating force of God's realized presence. Healing in this sense, the sense that Goldsmith means, is more than a mere restoration of physical health. Sometimes it is more important to bring the patient to a spiritual awakening than to heal him physically. Whichever comes first, in a perfect healing the two go together. The attitude of the perfect healer is thus defined by Goldsmith: "I can do nothing of myself, but as the Father and I are one the abundance of the Father is revealed through me. Where I am the splendour of the Father goes before me. We are God's instruments, we are His servants. We stay in the world as servants of the Most High; we stay in it as a blessing."

Few can maintain their consciousness permanently on this level, but many can pray and their prayers can have effect.

² *The Art of Spiritual Healing* by Joel Goldsmith.

. . . LOURDES

By I. JESUDASAN, S.J.

LOURDES! What a picture it evokes in the mind! There it stands, 1,300 feet above sea level, among the foothills of the lofty Pyrenean chain, only 26 miles from the Spanish border, in the south-west corner of France — a pleasant Arcadian scene of lush green fields and meadows made melodious with the music of the chirping birds, the swaying willows, the silver streams and the ring of the cowbells. In the dazzling sky of a radiant dawn, a slender spire rises sharply against the rounded hills. Underneath is a grotto — Massabielle — with its natural niche. A vast Esplanade separates 'the Domaine', the Fief of The Lady, from the commercial town.

With a local population of only 20,000, Lourdes is one of the world's most beautiful and famous towns and perhaps its best

known healing centre. Over 2,000,000 visitors and 30,000 sick of all faiths pour into it annually from every quarter of the globe. In 1953 there were 515 special trains to Lourdes, not to speak of chartered planes, buses and private cars. During the summer months, four or five special trains arrive on certain days. And, despite its tourist importance, Lourdes still retains the same century-old rustic, pastoral look which it had when Bernadette went about grazing her sheep.

Its attraction however is due not to the beauty of its landscape, but to this peasant girl, to whom, as the report went, the Blessed Virgin appeared 18 times at Massabielle. Once the news was noised abroad, there was a crowd at the grotto. But the Virgin spoke only to Bernadette. "You will pray to God for sinners . . . Penance! Pen-

ance! Penance! . . . Go drink at the spring and wash yourself in it. . . . You will tell the priests to have a chapel built here. . . . I wish people to come here in procession". But who was she to ask for such things? The answer came on March 25, 1858, "I am the Immaculate Conception".

From the start, ecclesiastical and civil authorities were as sceptical as the populace was enthusiastic. But the trickle of muddy water from which Bernadette had drunk and washed, continued to flow into a stream and then into a mighty torrent.¹ People prayed and burned candles at the grotto. And then there were the miracles! A blind man who washed at the stream regained sight. A mother dipped her dying child in the stream, and he revived. Naturally, popular enthusiasm mounted. But the local police barricaded the stream and the grotto under pretext of hygiene and illegal worship. Then came the cure of Emperor Napoleon's son by application of the Lourdes water; and, by command of the same Emperor, the grotto was declared open to the public (5th October 1858).

An ecclesiastical commission duly set up by the bishop of Tarbes vindicated the cause of Bernadette after four years of investigation, and the bishop issued a decree authenticating the apparitions and the miracles. A chapel was at last built in 1871.

The Church had capitulated; but the "intellectuals" did not. Controversy raged in the press for three quarters of a century. In 1905, Alexis Carrel, the future Nobel Prize winner (1912) was dismissed from the university of Lyons for saying that a case of T.B. in which he had been interested, was miraculously cured at Lourdes. Auto-suggestion, sheer popularisation, pious propaganda, such were the cries bandied at Lourdes. It was a fashion to speak of it in this vein. Carrel himself was only one of the outstanding examples of men who from a systematic scepticism of everything suprasensible, came to a re-discovery of supernatural certainty at Lourdes.²

Some people attributed the cures at Lourdes to some special medical properties in the

Lourdes water. And, quite early in its history, profiteers sought to make capital out of this spring. But the chemical and bacteriological analyses of the water demonstrated that its ingredients were no way different from those of any other mountain spring, and thus foiled their greedy purpose. Besides, not all the cures take place at the baths. A larger proportion of them occur either at the blessing of the Blessed Sacrament or before the grotto.

The cures include both functional and organic diseases such as advanced cases of cancer, diabetes, T.B., paralysis etc. Madame Biré seeing with dead optic nerves, Colonel Pellegrin cured of abscess of the liver and Madame Pillot cured of a tumor of the brain are only a few out of a host of astounding cures effected at Lourdes.

Thousands go to Lourdes every year in the hope of a cure. But most return uncured. And they no longer want to be cured. They are cured of the desire to be cured. No complaints, no resentment. Instead, they accept suffering willingly and cheerfully as a gift from God, as penance for their own and others' sins. In 1935 for instance, the famous iron-lunged American millionaire, Fred Snite's going to Lourdes created quite a sensation. Newsmen and photographers followed him every step of the journey. What a moment for a cure! But that is not the way of Lourdes. He was not cured. His only reaction was, "God's will be done . . . here life is a prayer. . . . We are in a place apart from the world — a place halfway to heaven."³ Few indeed they are who leave Lourdes unaffected. The most important thing that happens at Lourdes is the cure of souls. A number of priests are kept busy at the confessional all day and night. Can

¹ For the capacity of the stream, see page 127 of Mgr. Deery's *Our Lady of Lourdes*. (The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland, U.S.A. 1958.)

² See *Journey to Lourdes* by Alexis Carrel, (Hamish Hamilton, London, 1965.)

³ For the findings of these analyses see p. 37-8 of Ruth Cranston's *The Miracle of Lourdes*, (McGraw-Hill Book Coy., Inc., N. Y., 1955.)

⁴ *The Miracles of Lourdes*, p. 144.

you guess how many there are among those who confess who for years never approached a church or the sacraments? Now at last, at Lourdes they make their reconciliation to God.

If the uncured go mentally transformed, the cures themselves are not effected before this spiritual metamorphosis. Everyone begins by praying for himself. Then he opens his eyes to the sufferings of others. Now his prayer is for his neighbour rather than for himself. If ever he thinks of himself, it is no longer to be rid of pain, but to be strengthened to endure it. Then comes a third and final stage where he forgets both himself and his neighbour, to think only of the Virgin and her wish — sinners, penance. It is generally at this stage that many cures are reported.

A special atmosphere pervades these cures of Lourdes — one of prayer and service. Prayer from early in the morning till late into the night. All day long there are people before the grotto with extended arms. Hour after hour snatches of "Ave" are ringing from the three churches.⁵ Even a casual visitor cannot help getting into this rhythm of prayer. Then there are the processions — of the Blessed Sacrament in the afternoon and the candle-light procession at night — the latter perhaps the most impressive and never-to-be-forgotten of all Lourdes spectacles, in which on certain summer nights there are as many as 60,000 people winding like a huge fiery serpent into the enveloping darkness and chanting in diverse tongues "Ave, Ave, Ave Maria": To crown it all, the sacrifice of Calvary is renewed at the grotto in unending succession, all the twenty-four hours of the day.

Then there is the efficient volunteer system to help and serve the pilgrims and the sick, free of all cost. To be allowed to serve is all the favour and privilege they ask. Some of them are themselves people who have been cured at Lourdes. The backbone of this system is the organisation of hospitallers popularly known as brancardiers or stretcher-bearers. Comparable to the old Knights Hospitallers of St. John at Jerusalem, they

join service promising to give a certain amount of time and work to the sick every year. Piety, charity and discipline are their rule, and they are ever ready to forego a meal or sleep at an emergency call. There are over 2000 of them in permanent membership. These are ably assisted by the volunteer stretcher-bearers attached to each group of pilgrims. For 1954, their numbers reached 10,393.⁶ Many of them toil year-in, year-out in order to save enough to spend a few weeks at Lourdes serving the sick. There is among them a moving little story of two rich Indian bankers who, in the guise of poor men, served as brancardiers for two weeks.⁷

For a study and examination of the alleged cures, there spontaneously sprang up a free medical association which, as the Lourdes Medical Bureau and Commission, now enjoys international reputation with a membership of above 5,000 doctors of all shades of belief — Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists, atheists, agnostics etc. Every alleged cure must be accompanied by the certificate of a competent doctor stating the case as it stood just before the patient reached Lourdes. If the Bureau is satisfied with the genuineness of a cure, it sends all the documents, X-rays etc. connected with it, to the International Medical Commission.⁸ The latter, after further study by experts, either declares or does not declare its conviction, "We find no natural or scientific explanation of the cure". It is for the Church and the theologians to decide whether it can be proclaimed a miracle. The Medical Bureau and Commission rigorously follow up their cases for years, and the Church is even more severe. Out of more than 1,000 cures found inexplicable by science in these hundred years and more, it has only acknowledged about sixty as genuine miracles.

The Christian understands miracle as the suspension of the effect of a law of nature

⁵ The Church of the Rosary, St. Pius X. St. Bernadette.

⁶ See *The Miracles of Lourdes*, p. 48.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 51-2.

⁸ For the quality and calibre of the men who make up this Commission *ibid.*, p. 62-3.

by God as its Author. The law is not abolished nor is the nature of things altered; but only the effect is not produced on the object, as when the three children were no wise hurt by the blazing furnace.⁹ God may work miracles through His saints in order to honour them before men. It is the same for Mary. The miracles of Lourdes are attributed to her prayer. But over and above this honorific motive, the miracles and apparitions of Mary bear an essentially soteriological character. Her own words are proof enough.¹⁰ They are part of the salvation history of our race, and are strikingly reminiscent of Christ's own mission when He went about doing good, healing the sick, forgiving sins.¹¹ As were the miracles of Jesus, so are the miracles of Lourdes, symbols of the redemptive grace poured out on souls through Mary's prayers. Lourdes then is a continuation of the saving action of Christ.¹² Mary's part in it is to lead men to Christ and the Triune God.

The very location of Lourdes between two peaks atop which stand a cross and an observatory — the symbols of Science and Religion, staring at each other — is a big inter-

rogation: Can they co-exist? To this question, Lourdes itself is the answer: They can, do, and have to co-exist. The observable is not everything; and even on observable phenomena, science is only the first word. The last has to come from religion. Religion, therefore, far being antagonistic to science, is its necessary crown and complement which sees the final unity of all reality in God. As many a sceptic has owned, "If there are miracles, there must be God". For as Carl Jung said, "Whatever acts, must be". And here is something, a superhuman power that acts. Therefore it must be. There are miracles at Lourdes. Therefore there is God. God then is the message of Lourdes — a merciful God, a Saviour-God. As a French bishop put it — and well may we conclude with this — "For those who believe in God, Lourdes needs no explanation. For those who do not believe in God, Lourdes has no explanation."

⁹ Daniel, 3: 49-50.

¹⁰ Recall: Sinners, Penance.

¹¹ Louis Lochet's *Apparitions of Our Lady* (Herder, Freiburg, West Germany, 1960).

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 65-7.

SAI BABA AND HIS FOLLOWERS

By SAIDAS

To his followers, Sai Baba is God. Of course, God can take other forms as well. He wouldn't be God if He couldn't. He can appear as Rama or Christ or Ramana; but for Sai bhaktas Sai Baba is all-sufficient.

He was a peculiar Master. He did not give his followers a mantra to repeat. He did not give initiation in the ordinary way. "My Guru never taught me any mantras, so how shall I blow any into your ear?" He demanded only whole-hearted concentration on the Guru so that the love of the Guru can unite with your love and raise you up. "Trust in the Guru fully; that is the only sadhana." "Look at me whole-heartedly and I in turn will look at you whole-heartedly. . . . Neither practice nor scripture is necessary. Have faith and confidence in your Guru." "An aspirant should be immersed

in love for the Guru like a fish in the water which it cannot leave without dying."

He was not an intellectual. He did not write books. He did not even encourage his followers to read books. "People think they will find Brahma (God) in books, but instead they find bhrama (confusion)." He did not teach by lectures but by miracles. All kinds of miracles happened. A rigidly orthodox Brahmin, standing outside the Shirdi mosque and looking in, told his companions that he would never bow down to a guru who lived in a mosque. Suddenly he saw Sai Baba in the form of his own guru and bowed down. Sai Baba did not explain that the Guru is one in whatever form or religion he may appear; he showed it. A woman was preparing a meal for him in her own house and drove away a hungry dog that tried to steal

some of it. When she took it to him later he said: "No, you drove me away when I wanted it, so now I won't eat it." He didn't have to say: "Inasmuch as you do it to one of the least of these you do it also to me;" he showed it.

His miracles did not end with his physical body. That died as far back as 1918, but he continued just the same to appear to devotees, save them from accidents, cure them when ill, comfort them in distress, bring relief in misfortune. Not only to devotees but to many others also who had never before heard of him. As a result of this, his following now is for larger than at his death and is growing constantly.

The tradition of a great Master continues among his followers. Look at Ramana Maharshi: he was an intellectual and see what intellectual articles are written in *The Mountain Path*. Sai Baba's followers are mostly not intellectuals, just as he was not, and very few of them write books and articles; but it is surprising how many of them work miracles. It is a tradition descended from their Master; it just comes to them. It is invidious to mention some without others and I do it with apologies both to those I mention and those I do not. It is hard to live in India, for instance, without hearing of the astounding miracles performed by Sri Satya Sai Baba, who is held by his followers to be an incarnation of Sai Baba. Then there is the quiet, unassuming Basheer Baba who is of a Muslim family and, like Sai Baba himself, bridges the religions. In a less spectacular way he also uses powers. There is Sri Swami Keshaviah whose house in a far-out suburb of Madras is thronged on Thursday evenings by people who come to hear from him whether their plans will mature or their hopes be fulfilled.

There is a simple lady devotee whose gold medallion of Sai Baba rises up in the air in front of her when she intercedes with Sai Baba for supplicants. The common feature in these and other cases is that they are not powers that have been acquired by tapas, as is common with Hindu swamis and sadhus, but that have just come naturally by the Grace of Sai Baba. Something of his tradition of pouring out love and guidance on his followers through miracles has descended on his lieutenants also. And there is the same lack of formality. You do not have to be ordained his lieutenant; the selection is made informally by the outpouring of his Grace on those he chooses.

Some Sai bhaktas hold that efforts should be made to make Sai Baba widely known and revered throughout the world, as he is in India. My own opinion is that that is up to Sai Baba. Even if we write books and articles about him, will it make him widely known? Arthur Osborne's excellent book 'The Incredible Sai Baba' has been published by Rider & Co. in London,¹ but still we hear of no great Sai following in England. Perhaps the people in Western countries have enough roads to God and do not need this one. They have Christianity and Zen. If they do it is up to Sai Baba. He could easily raise up a follower (or followers) in Western countries to perform miracles that would shake the newspapers by the ears and make the scientists scratch their heads. There would be plenty of followers then and of demands for articles. Meanwhile, in India the Sai following is not only strong but growing. It advertises little but what keeps it vigorous is the love and power of Sai Baba flowing through it.

¹ And by Messrs Orient Longmans, Calcutta, India. (*Editor*)

OUTSIDE YOURSELF

By CLARE CAMERON

Have you ever known what it feels like to be literally outside yourself? You are, perhaps, reading in bed, and your glance falls on your clothes lying on the chair, and with a shock you realise they don't belong to you but only to something that houses you. Your head turns to survey the books on the bedside table — how dead they seem. Surely they have nothing to teach you? A train goes by in the distance, but you hear it from another dimension.

Outside the moonlight is beautiful and still over the trees in the garden, but how opaque it seems, as if you are looking through hard, thick lenses that fix it in time.

To recover your identity, you recall the humdrum events of the day. How very slowly everything has happened even though at the time you seemed too busy to think. Slow-slow-slow. Yes, everything is slowed down in what is erroneously called life, even as everything is seen as through a glass darkly.

But here, and now, outside yourself, the speed of light! The dazzling clarity of light! The infinity of it! And the unity of it all where all imagined barriers are gone! The sense of weightlessness now, so that one can, and does, walk on air. Walk? No, run, fly, with the speed of light. For you are the Light.

Freedom? Encased in our flesh, weighed down by our illusions, with a heavy darkness between ourselves and our fellow-creatures throughout creation, we have never known it. Wisdom? We have glimpsed it

as men look up through bars above their heads to the sunlight. Love? O, what keeps us back from loving, when, seen in this Light, all men and women, all living things are endearing and lovable and crying out for the recognition and response of Love!

Is it in a room I write? Who writes? I am not here. A hand guides the pen but who or what dictates the words which are so distressingly limited and inflexible, letting through only gleams, invoking but faint echoes. Words are so separate from one another, so slow, mere expediciencies. In their millions they are like grass-blades, but if you saw them truly you would know they are plucked from the meadows of Heaven. They are like rain-drops, but if you were indeed the drop you would know it was part of the Waters of Life. . .

O press me not back into my body, I who am the universe. Dull not the vision that overflowed the confines of the mind. Break my heart of stone if only I may love.

Is this what it feels like "to die"? To die? This is to be born! I died when I emerged from my mother's womb. How strange it is, to be born when one is still in and with the body, but how easily parted from it! Is the flesh then but gossamer when the Spirit illumines it?

Now I know that death, as we have never known it, is Life, and life as we know it is death.

Ah, THOU! In Whom we move and have our being and know it not. . .

Public speeches, outer activity and material help are all outweighed by the silence of the Mahatmas. They accomplish more than others.

—BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

SRI-LA-SRI PANRIMALAI SWAMIGAL*

A SIDDHA PURUSHA OF THE SOUTH

By A. V. RAMACHANDRAN

Panrimalai is the name of a village situated on a hill in the Kodaikanal Range in South India between Madurai and Tiruchirapalli. The literal meaning of the word is 'Pig Hill'. The name is explained in mythology by the story that one Rangavidyadhara, born as a pig in the hills on account of a curse, was killed by the arrow of the Pandian King who came there to hunt. Its mate was also killed by the Raja, whereupon Lord Siva himself took the form of a female pig to suckle the twelve orphaned young ones. The Hill has been the abode of many Rishis and Siddhas who had realized God and attained Liberation. It is said that even now there are Sages in meditation in these hills who are invisible to human eyes but who give darshan to Saints.



It is in this Holy Place of Panrimalai that Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal¹ was born. His father Arumugam Pillai was a great devotee of Lord Shanmuga. The child, who was named Ramaswami by his parents, showed signs of spiritual fervour even at the age of 5. When he was taken to Palani Hills, he could be persuaded to return home only after he was assured of being taken to the sanctum sanctorum as often as he wished.

The boy was left under the care of his grand-parents at Balasamudram for want of facilities for education at Panrimalai. At school he showed great promise. 'Salli Samiyar',¹ an ascetic of a high order who was dwelling in the Aiyampulli Vinayakar Temple, recognised in him a Great Swami. The Lord Himself in the garb of a sadhu wrote something with a 'Vel' on the tongue of the boy in the Ganesha Temple near the village and then disappeared. This was the beginning of his spiritual evolution. Young

Ramaswami suddenly realised that he could perform miracles, without knowing how or why. He would put cobras round his neck and play with them. He could drive away evil spirits. Small pebbles distributed by him to his playmates, turned into sugar-candy in their mouths. While on one of his frequent visits to Palani Temple, he met his Guru 'Chatti Swamiyar'¹ the great Siddha Purusha, who initiated him.

By doing Sadhana, young Ramaswami discovered that he could cure many diseases in the name of Lord Muruga. His fame spread far and wide. 'Achandamalai Paradesi', another sage who happened to visit the

* Articles about Swamis and Gurus are written for us by their disciples. We do not presume to pass judgment on the opinions of the author.

¹A respectful form of 'Swami' in Tamil.

village, gave further impetus to his spiritual evolution by taking him with him to visit many holy places throughout India. The young Swami became a fully realised soul — a Siddha Purusha.

In deference to the wishes of his parents, Ramaswami married and settled down to domestic life. His spiritual Sadhana was however continued and he attained fulfilment. Soon he came to be known as "Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal".

The lines on Sri Swamigal's palms and feet outline the conch, chakra, shatkonam and banner of Lord Shanmuga, which are indicative of his celestial qualities and greatness. He is also endowed with a spiritual 'eye' between the eyebrows which is generally covered up by sandal paste and kumkum. He exudes fragrance and is a living Sat Purusha of the Highest Order. His childlike simplicity and charm, solicitude for the welfare of people irrespective of caste, creed, status and religion, his intense desire to relieve people of their sufferings and to lead them towards the path of God are well known to all who have come in contact with him.

Of his miracles there are many which could be recorded but for want of space I shall mention only a few. Names have been omitted for obvious reasons.

The Swamiji was securely tied to the iron bars of a window in one of the rooms of a house in New Delhi. Soon after the people present in the room had retired from that room, they were called by Swamiji from another room 30 feet away from the place where he was first tied where they found him tied up to one of the stands of the wooden rack in exactly the same manner and position as he was left tied in the first room. Not a single knot was disturbed or displaced.

A married lady was suffering for quite some time from pain in the back which disabled her from bending or sitting without support. T.B. of the spine was suspected. An X-ray examination revealed that the 5th lumbar vertebra was eaten away. An immediate operation was advised by doctors and

all arrangements were made for admitting her to hospital. Just then, having learnt that Sri Swamigal was in Bombay and having heard of his miraculous powers, her parents took her to him. With great difficulty she prostrated before Swamiji and narrated her pitiable story with tears trickling down her cheeks. Swamiji gave her turmeric and asked her to rub it in water and apply it all over her body during a bath particularly where she felt pain. She was also given vibhuti (sacred ash). Within a week she was able to sit on the floor to dine with her relatives, much to the delight of her parents and her husband. Another X-ray taken thereafter revealed that the 5th lumbar vertebra showed greater consolidation and the osteolytic area was more definitely outlined. The overall findings indicated satisfactory progress radiologically. The lady was completely cured within twelve days and is now attending to her normal domestic chores. She is a regular visitor to the prayer meetings of Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal Gyana Sat Sabha at Bombay.

A young man, the son of a chief executive in a Textile Mill in Bombay, was suffering from acute intestinal trouble with temperature. He could not retain anything which was eaten and felt excruciating pain in the stomach. He was restless and sleepless. The doctors suggested immediate operation as the only hope, the success of which also they could not vouchsafe. The father, who is an ardent devotee of Swamiji with complete faith in him, dashed to Dindigal for Swamiji's blessings. The Swamiji accompanied him to Bombay and within a few days, by Swamiji's grace, the patient started moving about and taking food. He is now completely cured without any trace of the trouble. The patient himself took Swamiji back to Dindigal, driving the car all the way, without any let or hindrance.

A young boy aged 10 who had lost the sight of both eyes, a couple of years ago, recovered the sight of both the eyes by the grace of Swamiji.

Miracles like materialising kumkum, turmeric, vibhuti, flowers, fruits, sugarcandy,

etc. apparently from nowhere are but child's play to him.

After having a coconut broken into two pieces and the water emptied the two pieces were joined together and the coconut became a whole piece again with water inside it. A wonder of this nature has been repeated by him many times. Some of the cures effected by him, being of a personal and confidential nature, may not be published for a long time to come.

A few of Sri Swamigal's teachings are quoted below :—

"Immortality is the birthright of all. Every Soul is potentially divine. God dwells in the heart of each one of us. To earn God's grace, unalloyed devotion is necessary. With unalloyed devotion comes purity of the Soul and when the soul becomes pure, discretion, non-desire, company of the righteous, service to Saints, singing the Lord's praises and truthfulness follow, resulting in overflowing Bhakti or boundless devotion to God. This boundless devotion to God will in turn lead to siddhi (powers) which in turn will lead to Mukti or Liberation. Man in the Liberated State realises Atman which itself is Knowledge of God, Prakriti and Paramatman. Love will then radiate in all its effulgence. Such a one becomes a God-Man, shedding all human limitations and transcending good and evil. He becomes the instrument of God and sees Him in all and all in Him."

"He who would be wise should subject himself to certain disciplines. An undivided devotion to the Guru and uncompromising control of the senses are necessary. These two are the sure means to attain the ultimate objective of life. That is the lesson which our great saints have taught us."

"If you move one step towards God He advances ten steps towards you." "God is sweet sugar candy to those who have faith in Him but a lump of hard stone to those who do not have that faith."

"One can remain in the family and still achieve realisation. Like water drops on a lotus leaf one can remain detached in family life."

"Control the five senses in the body and behold Him within."

"The Holy Panchakshara 'Namassivaya' is in the body itself. Legs represent NA, Stomach MA, Shoulders SI, mouth VA and eyes YA. The esoteric truths of this sacred mantra are to be learnt from a realised guru in the privacy of devout discipleship with due humility and fervour."

"Milk and water mix freely but butter taken from milk does not mix with water. It floats. Similarly the soul which has attained realisation will not be affected by association with illnatured and imperfect beings."

"To realise that eternal, basic and permanent State which is beyond birth and death and therefore deathless and birthless, should be the high, exalted and ultimate goal of human life."

"The difference between animals and man is that animals possess only the five senses whereas man possesses also the sixth sense. With the special quality of discrimination bestowed on us, it is our duty to tread the righteous path shown to us by the great ones and reach the blessed feet of the Lord — there to experience everlasting bliss."

"God's grace belongs to one and all. To think that 'I alone am entitled to this grace' is ignorance. Even the feeling that one is a servant of God would be adequate enough to root out egoism."

"The seeker must have faith in God and abiding devotion to Him. Then the Satguru will himself come in quest of him and give him initiation suited to him."

"A disciple should stick to one guru only for God Realization. If he seeks guidance from different gurus, he cannot achieve anything. By digging shallow in different places one cannot strike water but if one digs deep in one place water will be found."

"When yogis mindfully bestow mercy, the doors of yogic stages are automatically flung open without one's own effort. This is a truth worth knowing. Even if the grace of God and the Guru are available, unless a man yearns for liberation or vision of God, he

cannot achieve any benefit. However much a man may strive, without God's grace he cannot gain anything in this life. Therefore man should strive and work hard in his lifetime to attain Godhead. One should seek and learn what one does not know from others who know."

"Even at present there are amongst us God-men who are capable of converting dreary deserts into lands of plenty. One should search, seek and find out such a realized Guru."

Sri Swamigal performs miracles only to prove that there is a higher spiritual force which guides the destinies of man, and to create faith in God in the minds of atheists. Rightly has Jesus Christ said "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." (St. John IV. 48) Fulfilment of this saying of Christ's has become a matter of daily routine with Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal.

This is his mission in the present context of a sceptical world, and posterity will be highly indebted to him for his contribution to the spiritual evolution of mankind.

For the convenience of earnest seekers an ashram has been built recently at Dindigal in Madras State, where Swamiji is now staying, easily accessible to all. The ashram which is in Balakrishnapuram, is about ten minutes' walk from Dindigal Railway Station. Dindigal is about 430 Kilometres from Madras and can be reached by the Trivandrum, Tirunelveli or Tuticorin Express. Dindigal can also be reached from Palghat, via Olvakkot, Pollachi and Palni. It is also very near Madurai which is famous for its Meenakshi temple.

May the earnest seekers of the Spirit get enlightenment, guidance, solace and succour from Sri Swamigal who is a living Saint and a great Siddha Purusha.

DESOLATION

By A. RAO

You bade me lay down my life for your sake, Lord Christ.
 I have laid it here at your feet.
 Is it nothing but a soiled rag
 That you do not deign to accept it,
 That you do not stoop down and raise it?
 What now am I to do, despised and rejected of you, Lord Christ?

He who lays down his life for your sake
 Shall find it, you said.
 I have not bargained,
 I have not come as a merchant, Lord Christ,
 I have not asked to find.
 Only I have laid down my life.
 What now am I to do, despised and rejected of you, Lord Christ?

You bade me come as your bride, Lord Christ.
 I tore my love from others,
 I came alone through the night,
 With much toil I am here,
 And you have let me stand
 Loveless and unloved before you.
 What now am I to do, despised and rejected of you, Lord Christ?

HAMSA VIDYA

By K. HARIHARA IYER

Hamsa Vidya is Chit Swarupa, that is Pure Consciousness. It is what brought the world into existence. It abides in the heart-cavity. It is self-illuminating, without being illumined from outside. It shines everywhere but is concealed by its own brilliance like a bird in a cage or in its nest.

The Lord of Creation performed tapas (austerity) by which he acquired power and created the world. Tapas brings control of the Prana, which is Hamsa. Physically Prana is the life-breath. One Upanishad says that when Lord Vishnu wanted to create man he meditated upon Pranava (Omkaara), which is a form of Hamsa Vidya or the science of breath.

Every living being from the smallest insect to the Lord of Creation has breath leaving and entering its body incessantly. Breathing is necessary for living beings. All practise it, although without conscious effort or awareness of it. Conscious manipulation of the force which activates our breathing is Hamsa Vidya.

This Vidya has its origin in the Vedas and has been developed into a science by saints and sages. Very great benefit accrues from it. It frees us from illness, senility and fear of death. Most important of all: it brings Liberation.

Our ancient literature refers to a bird called 'hamsa', literally 'swan' as having been in existence long ago. Its special faculty is said to be the ability to purify milk by separating it from water. And it is the traditional vehicle of Brahma. It symbolises a power in our mind, the Brahma Shakti. The mythological Hamsa is represented as abiding in a tank full of lotuses and blissfully sipping their nectar. Similarly in the pure mind the reverberation of the two syllables of the hamsa incantation produce Self-Knowledge.

This knowledge gives perennial happiness which is distributed through the 72,000 nadis or subtle nerve-channels traversing the

human body. The wise revel in it. It is inexhaustible and perennial. A work by Shankara called 'Soundarya Lahiri' speaks of one who adores the two hamsas or twin swans, for Hamsa Vidya leads to the Brahma Tattva region of Self-Knowledge which is the essence of the Vedas and Upanishads. There is a saying that the Hamsa incantation leads to heaven, but it should be added that this is so only when the form of the incantation and permission to use it have been duly transmitted by a Guru.

In the symbolism of the Hamsa one wing represents the Vedas and the other the Agamas. The sun and moon form its head. Its throat and mouth produce Nada, by which is meant pure sound on the subtle plane before it manifests itself in articulate syllables. The two feet of the bird are Siva and Shakti. It is said that its tail is the Unconditioned Brahman, but the real meaning is that Brahman Itself is of the form of the entire bird. Brahman here means that which shines like myriads of suns, removing ignorance and bestowing Divine Knowledge. It refers to a kind of Bhavana Yoga and Dhyana Yoga. He who practises this becomes Brahman Itself. By knowing this we know all. By probing into this mystic lore we acquire Enlightenment.

Just as a musical instrument contains various reeds producing different sounds, so the human body is constantly producing currents and cross-currents by means of the senses which report the activities of the external world but always with twists and distortions, never in their true perspective. The world is really an expansion of the Brahma Chaitanya or Divine Knowledge into forms and names. In fact there is always nada or sound in our body. There is no one without this anahata nada or dhvani. Bhagavan Ramana explained this beautifully when he said that to concentrate on the source from which the sound 'I' emanates

is true tapas. This is a very penetrating explanation.

The human body can produce harmony, like a musical instrument, through the single channel of the Sushumna which is the source and controller of the 72,000 nadis, without wasting energy in cross-currents. But to do

this one has to be initiated into the Hamsa mantra by a qualified Guru. This science was known and enjoyed by the Sages and Yogis of old and has been handed down to us by them. It safeguards against illness, senility and fear of death and brings Divine Bliss, as Adi Shankara has testified.

PRAYER AND POWER

By CORNELIA BAGAROTTI

Around Man and unknown to himself lies the great inflowing, interpenetrating ocean of life. Above him it shines in the glory of the stars, around him it gleams in the light of the seas and forests, within him it radiates in the secret fastness of the human heart. Ever-living, ever breathing, eternal, it is a tremendous ocean of Light. This is the Divine Love of the Cosmos, this is the creator of all universes. This is the substance from which all that was made was made, this is the sacred Word. Nearer than touch, closer than his own hand, forever and always, indestructibly there.

Yet in the midst of it all stands Man blinded by the darkness his own ego has projected into this great Light of eternal Life. — Unknowing of the infinite glory of which he has always been and shall always remain a LIVING part.

How many Saints and Seers and Mystics and illumined Souls and world teachers have come to try to bring to Man this revelation. How many sacred books have been written, how many dedicated lives have been lived. But so great has been man's immersion in his separate ego and his body that this revelation could not be passed on. It still remains today the greatest mystery of all.

A Divine discontent seizes some men at a certain period of their lives and they, like the Buddha, go off seeking the answer to eternal questions. They may spend their lives reading the spiritual teachings of all time and all peoples, they may enter a monastic order or seek an ashram or remain in their own

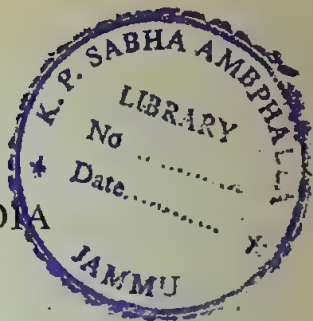
households but the secret they search for is ever the same.

At some point, like the smallest child, they must look up and look beyond themselves. They must surrender their ego, their body, their possessions, their ambitions, their desires, their actions and return to the infinite as they came — as a child sustained and nourished and created by Love alone. This recognition of God and surrender to God brings with it humility, reverence, faith, prayer, selflessness, harmlessness, all encompassing love, and is the mother of all virtues. Dazed Man falls on his knees blinded by the infinite vision of a love beyond all magnitude of which he is a conscious breathing part. Not my will but Thine becomes his constant prayer. His temporal Self dies and the eternal Self is revealed. At this moment the words of the Christ sound forth "My peace I bring you, not as the world gives, I give to you." — the peace of God which passeth all understanding. When Man receives this peace he knows that he has Love.

What once began as the path of prayer ends with the receiving of a revelation in which the ultimate power of all is born, the power to share with all participation in the Divine. Even if the illumined Man said not a word, his being pregnant with God's ocean of Life would move beyond time and space to infuse the hearts of Men. Something of his Divinity would pass into them quickening their own hearts to return to the infinite, not by leaving the world but by transmuting every word and act with cosmic consciousness.

FIRE-WALKING IN SOUTH INDIA

By PURISAI MURUGESA MUDALIAR



Fire-walking is still a regular event in Tiruvannamalai and other South Indian towns. Usually a trench is filled with burning charcoal and over this the practicans walk, coming to the end unscathed.

The ceremony is usually held under the auspices of a temple. Some of these hold it once a year, while others maintain a regular ritualistic chanting of the *Mahabharata* and celebrate with fire-walking each time the entire work is brought to an end. Those who participate are usually ordinary householders, not sadhus or sannyasins. They are largely composed of non-Brahmins. In some cases they are given a particular mantra to recite for protection, but there are also cases where they are protected simply by faith in the God or Goddess of the temple. Usually they fast for some days beforehand, not in the sense of abstaining completely from food and drink but observing a strictly regulated and very abstemious diet. Always they have to maintain an attitude of purity and devotion.

One interesting thing about these fire-walking ceremonies is how little they are publicised. For instance, scarcely any one from Sri Ramanasramam visits them. Visitors here seldom even know that they occur. This reticence is in a way a guarantee of their genuineness: it shows that they are not staged to impress the audience, as there is practically no audience for them to impress — only the usual local people.

The practice of walking on fire is observed with enthusiasm in the Tamil and Telugu speaking parts of India, especially in temples dedicated to the Goddess Draupadi Amman. Only in the Coimbatore district in the Tamil land it is observed in temples dedicated to the Tamil Mariamman, the equivalent of the North Indian Durga, the spouse of Siva.

There are many pious Tamilians who do not worship these Goddesses; but that does not mean that they have no regard for them or are hostile to them. To say that a person is not one's friend does not mean that he is an enemy; he may simply be a stranger. Similarly, to say that one does not worship a particular deity does not mean that one is hostile. Men of understanding worship the One God; others worship the particular deity or form of God which appeals to them and receive the Grace of this deity.

In all temples where the fire-walking ceremony is practised it is a goddess that is worshipped, whether they are of the Saivite or Vaishnavite cult. In such temples, under the Grace of Parashakti, the Great Goddess,



fire-walking is practised once a year. Chief among these temples is the great temple of Tiruvannamalai. Here the Goddess has the name of Unnamulai. On the large, stone-

paved courtyard in front of the temple of Unnamulai, inside the great temple of Sri Arunachala, on the full moon day of the month of Adi (mid-July to mid-August) a huge fire of burning charcoal and other things is spread out at night and people dance on it.

At all festivals where the Lord is worshipped together with His Shakti in this temple, she is known as Apithakuchambal in Sanskrit and Unnamulai in Tamil ; but when that Shakti alone is worshipped during Navarathri or during this fire-walking ceremony she is seldom called by either of these names but simply Parashakti, the Great Shakti. Such is the tradition of the place. It is at these two festivals, in the months of July-August and September-October, in this temple and under the auspices of Parashakti that fire-walking takes place.

The traditional doctrine is that the Divine Trinity of Ayan, Hari and Hara (or Brahma, Vishnu and Siva) perform the cosmic tasks of creation, preservation and destruction, but through the instrumentality of Parashakti, that is of their executive power under the names respectively of Lakshmi, Sarasvathi and Durga. The relations of Shakti to Siva are regarded as threefold, that is as mother, daughter and consort. First she appears from Siya, as daughter from parent ; then from her Siva takes form as her child ; then the two forms unite to create all the forms of the cosmos. Nevertheless, despite these images, one has to remember that both Siva and Shakti are formless. They are only the twin source of light.

Siva is the sun and Shakti the moon. The former is hot and the latter cool. Out of intense heat the world is born, and that heat is itself called Shakti. The moon cools the intense heat of the sun and makes it of use to people. In whatever form and under whatever name Parashakti is worshipped, under that name and form She bestows grace on her devotees. All such names and forms are only aspects or manifestations of Parashakti. She is the Reality of Pachiamman,

Mariamman and Angalamman. All are the same Parashakti. It is this Parashakti who has been sung by both Thayumanavar and Subramanya Bharati.

The Goddess Draupadi is widely worshipped in the South. She is revered in the Mahabharata as one who always kept her vows, even in the city of Virata, when she was in banishment. In various parts of India the last day of her festival is devoted to fire-walking. Both in the Tamil and Telugu parts there are various stories relating to the origin of these festivals.

In the Telugu country it is usual for the young men to take a vow to walk on fire. At the time of the ceremony they wear female clothes dyed yellow and do their hair like girls, sometimes wearing false hair. They wear black ornaments round their necks and in their ears. Although they are all males, they look like a crowd of girls. Only after such a ceremony the youths are allowed to marry.

However, these customs do not hold in the Tamil land. Here people of all ages and both men and women take part in the ceremony. Each has his own prayer or vow ; though there may be some who take part without any particular prayer or vow. Here the ceremony is not prior to a marriage.

It is possible that this dedication of fire-walking to Draupadi may go back to the Mahabharata. It is said there that after the defeat of Duryodhana and the slaughter of his brothers, the Pandavas made obeisance to Dritharashtra and condoled with him for the loss of his sons. They were blessed by him, after which Yudhistira asked him what was yet to be done. He replied that the bodies of his sons should be offered up in fire and that their wives should join them in the same fire, so that they could be united happily with them in heaven. Bhima undertook to perform this task. The wives too entered the fire, thus attaining undying fame. It may be that the Telugu youths dressed up as women represent this episode.

There is also a Tamil story reflecting the greatness of Draupadi. Between Gingee and Tiruvannamalai, in Singavaram, there is a temple to Sri Ranganadha. Here there was a king named Kandhan who had suffered a defeat. In desperation he performed a ceremony in worship of Draupadi. Pleased with his worship, she appeared before him and promised that whoever should worship her as he had done would obtain whatever he prayed for and that all obstacles would be removed for him. She also promised that whoever walked on fire in full faith would remain unscathed. From that day onwards

this fire-walking festival is observed with great enthusiasm in the Tamil land.

In the border country between the Tamil and Telugu parts many devotees participate in these ceremonies. There are some who have walked on fire a hundred times and have recorded their own surprise that it does not burn them. It is a fairly large area that they walk over, covered with fire and emitting intense heat, and yet they remain unscathed. This is a sign of the Grace of the Mother-Goddess protecting her worshippers. May this festival long endure! May Parashakti bless us! May her devotees prosper!

THE NONSENSE OF 'LIFE' AND 'DEATH'

By WEI WU WEI

What difference could there be between 'living' and 'dying'? 'Living' is only the elaboration in sequential duration of what otherwise is known as 'death'.

When What-we-are functions, extending in three apparent spatial dimensions and another interpreting them as duration, together known as 'space-time', there is what we know as 'living'. When that process ceases we are no longer extended in sequential duration, we are no longer elaborated in 'space'; 'space-time' is no more and the apparent universe dis-appears.

Then we say that we are 'dead'.

But as what we are we have never 'lived', and we cannot 'die'.

Where could 'we' live? When could 'we' die? How could there be such things as 'we'? 'Living' is a spatial illusion, 'dying' is a temporal illusion, 'we' are a spatiotemporal illusion based on the serial interpretation of dimensional 'stills' or 'quanta' cognised as movement.

Only the concepts of infinity and intemporality can suggest intellectually a notion of what we are as the source and origin of appearance or manifestation.

HEART AND HEAD

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

In my heart pure being, pure self of me :
The world a form it takes — unreal ;
Happenings a form it takes, people who come and go,
All things.

In my head a mind that cannot stand alone :
Watches and clings but cannot stand alone.

Two ways it yearns :

Outwards to the world, seeing it a real thing
Outside itself, full of regrets and wants,
Tormenting ;

Inwards to pure being — then again the world
Appears unreal, a form, in me, its sting drawn.

How escape the torment
Of an enslaved mind ?

Two ways :

Mind gone, absorbed in self — pure radiance ;

Mind rearisen — then let it yearn

Not outwards to the world but to the self —

Warm surge of love, ecstatic bliss.

Both ways are good — world-torment bad.

World-clinging mind that cannot stand alone —
The world withdrawn at death : what will it do ?

Fears. Will not face it,

Will not face

The thought of it.

With dangling tentacles, the world to which it clung
Gone all away ;

Ivy without a tree —

What will it do ?

Mind outward turned that seems to stand alone,
Ghost stiffened into semblance of a man,
Forgets pure being, forgets its inner self,
Forgets, denies,
Knows death ahead.

Catches some glimmer of the Self behind,
Sees it as other, sees itself foredoomed,
Frustrated by the world, then flung away,
Broken at last, bruised, crushed, devoured
By that which it thinks other.
The more it fights is broken more,
Crunched against the bars,
Caught in a rat-trap.

Catches some glimmer : then the silent voice
 Millifluous,
 Faint perfume hinting of ancestral home :
 Victory in defeat, total defeat,
 Total surrender, brings it home again.
 Will it rest now —
 Female at last —
 Rest and no longer rove,
 Rest in the clasp of love,
 Will it rest now ?

SPIRITUAL PRAYER

By I. G. SCHULTZ

The path up the mountain is the most difficult enterprise in life. Few there are who seek it ; fewer still who really try to follow it. It is necessary to leave behind all the wishes of the individual self, and here most people fail. Remembering the word of Christ that he who asks will receive, they apply it to worldly wishes and are often disappointed. Think of times of war or of catastrophes and epidemics — how many prayers have been sent up to heaven ! Is it not unscrupulous to pray for the victory of one's own country in war, thereby praying defeat upon the enemy ?

But the Bible also tells us that we should pray for the Holy Spirit. In modern times the American teacher Joel Goldsmith emphasizes again and again that true prayer is not asking for material things or giving hints to the Omniscient God what to do but only prayer for conscious union with God in the sanctuary of our heart. Such prayer will always eventually find fulfilment.

It may be hard for a sick person not to pray for recovery or a person in financial

need not to ask for help, but all such personal wishes have to be given up. We must come by meditation into that real communion with God of which Goldsmith says : " Sometimes it transcends all words and thoughts, and eventually the personal sense of self completely disappears and nothing is left but God." ¹

In the Realized Presence of God everything is possible and the supply of all we need will be added of itself ; and this Presence is the fulfilment. We only need to become still and receptive, sufficiently at peace to say " Speak, Lord, Thy servant heareth." Then we shall understand, as Goldsmith says, that " Thy grace is my sufficiency in all things." ² We have ascended far towards the summit of the mountain when we desire but one thing : to know God aright " Whom to know aright is life eternal".

¹ *St. Luke, XI, 13.*

² *From Spiritual Resources by Joel Goldsmith, Allen & Unwin.*

SELF - ENQUIRY

.....QUIS SEPARABIT

The devotees of Sri Bhagavan are spread all over the world.—It is impossible to contact them individually. I am writing this piece through *The Mountain Path*, but it is really written in a personal way — as if to each one separately.

The Sage says: in all possible difficulties or problems—personal, domestic, even political or religious—enquire for whom the problem exists. By this honest (serious) enquiry we go deep inside and come to a point which is really (in the beginning) a conceptual Self, a Self of mentation and not the *real* Self.

The real Self—or simply the Self—cannot be “reached” or experienced in the sense in which we experience “something”, because it is beyond the trifold phenomenon of experiencer, experience and experienced or seer, sight and seen.

The Sage simply says “Enquire”.....

And here lies the crux of the matter.

Though we say (as we have read and heard) that Self is the source, we ourselves have not actually found it so, because our preconceived ideas come between. Our ideas of the Self are certainly not the Self. We suppose that it is the Self that we are coming to, but it is certainly not that Self: though later we may reach that state.

I will try to explain.

Our grief, our yearning for something, in short our problem, brings us to this conceptual Self, to our theory of a Self; but eventually the Real (call it Self) comes into being, or rather that ever-existent comes into our “experiencing”. (But this is not experiencing of the trifold experience-being.)

Many of us get stuck in the conceptual Self and never reach this nature referred to above, of knower-knowledge-known; it is direct experience, thus get nowhere.

Devotees of Sri Ramana Maharshi should see with an open mind—devotees of Sri Ramana Maharshi who are really sincere and want to tread the path propounded by Him.

If I can offer a helping hand—a friend’s hand—If any find it of no use they can leave it; if any find it useful it may serve for dotting the “i”s and crossing the “t”s of the original teaching.

It is a thing to be understood in oneself, privately—each one for himself.

It is not a matter for discussion.



The Bhagavad Gita

Translated by Prof. G. V. KULKARNI and ARTHUR OSBORNE

CHAPTER FOUR

1

Sri Bhagavan said :

I proclaimed this imperishable yoga to Vivasvan, he to Manu and Manu to Ikshvaku.

This is the tradition of the Gita teaching. Vivasvan is the Sun-God. His son, Manu, is the founder of the human race. Manu's son, Ikshvaku, was a famous king of the solar dynasty.

2

Thus handed down by tradition, the royal sages knew it, O Scourge of the Foe, until it was lost through long lapse of time.

Two important points arise from this verse : one is that the transmission is through royal or

Kshatriya, not Brahmin, sages. And in this connection it is to be remembered that Rama and Krishna were both of royal descent, as, outside Hinduism, were Buddha and Christ also.

The second point is the affirmation, continued in vv. 3, 7 and 8, that religion, far from progressing, declines and needs periodical renewal.

3

Today this same ancient yoga, this supreme secret, have I expounded to you, because you are my worshipper and friend.

4

Arjuna said :

Later was your birth, earlier that of Vivasvan ; how then am I to understand that you originally proclaimed this to him ?

5

Sri Bhagavan said:

Many births of mine have gone by, and of yours too, Arjuna; I know them all, while you do not, O Scourge of the Foe.

6

Unborn and eternal Self though I am, Lord of all beings though I am, yet, resorting to my Nature (Prakriti) I take birth through my own Power. (Maya)

Prakriti is 'Nature' in the sense of Universal Substance, undifferentiated, primordial, virgin and the Mother of all. Maya is illusion but also the power that creates illusion.

Here and in the next two verses is enunciated the doctrine of Avatars. An Avatar is not an ordinary mortal making karma or struggling to get free from karma but a Divine Incarnation assuming the appearance of human limitation for the welfare of mankind.

7

Whenever dharma decays and adharma prevails, O Bharata, I manifest Myself.

8

For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the evil and for the establishment of dharma I take birth from age to age.

9

He who thus rightly knows My divine birth and activity is not reborn on leaving the body, Arjuna, but comes to Me.

This is an enunciation of Jnana-marga, the path of Knowledge. It is obvious that Liberation cannot come from mere knowledge of or belief in a historical fact. A deeper meaning must be sought. He who realizes the immersion of the uncontaminable Spirit in the apparent contamination of individual life and action cannot be encased again in the ignorant state of individual being but unites with the Spirit.

10

Many have there been who, free from attachment, fear and anger, absorbed in Me and taking refuge in Me, have been purified by the austerity (tapas) of wisdom and have attained My state.

The term translated here and in the following verses as 'wisdom' is 'jnana', meaning 'knowledge' in the sense of Divine Certitude, not mental understanding.

11

In whatever way men approach Me, in that way do I come to them. All paths that men follow are paths to me, O Son of Pritha.

12

Those who seek success in their actions here sacrifice to the gods, for action yields fruit speedily in this world.

13

The fourfold order of society I created on the basis of men's qualities and actions; yet though I am its author, know Me to be inactive and immutable.

The chaturvarnya is the fourfold division of society into Brahmins or priests, Kshatriyas or warriors, Vaishyas or merchants and agriculturists, and Shudras or labourers. Natural propensities are said to have decided a man's caste at the beginning; later they became hereditary.

14

Activity does not contaminate Me, nor have I any craving for its fruit. He who knows this of Me is not bound by activity.

Here again the deeper meaning of 'Me' must be grasped. It is not knowing or believing the historical Krishna to have been such and such that can liberate a man but realizing his own true Self to be such.

15

(Safe) in this knowledge, the Ancients who sought Liberation engaged in activity. Do you also, therefore, engage in activity, as the Ancients did of old.

16

What is activity and what inactivity? About this even the wise are confused. I will explain to you what activity is, knowing which you will be freed from evil.

17

Activity has to be understood, also wrong activity, also inactivity. The nature of activity is hard to understand.

18

He alone is wise, he is a yogi, he has accomplished all activity, who sees inactivity in activity and activity in inactivity.

That is to say who sees detached activity to be inactivity and mere abstention from action to be activity. It is to be noted how this tallies with the Taoist teaching of *wei-wu-wei*, inactive activity.

19

One whose undertakings are all free from desire and whose activity has been purified in the flame of wisdom is termed a Sage by those who know.

20

Indifferent to the fruits of action, ever content and utterly independent, he is inactive even while engaged in activity.

21

One who engages in activity with his body only, without desire, controlled in heart and mind, having renounced possessions, incurs no sin.

22

Satisfied with what comes to him by chance, beyond the pairs of opposites, free from envy, equal in success and failure, he is not bound by his actions.

23

The activity of one who is detached and set free, whose mind is stabilized in wisdom, whose action is sacrifice, is entirely dissolved.

24

The act of offering is Brahman, the oblation is Brahman, the fire in which it is offered is Brahman, the offerer himself is Brahman. By acting with his mind fixed ever on Brahman a man becomes Brahman.

25

Some yogis offer sacrifice to the gods; others sacrifice self itself in the fire of Brahman.

This is interpreted by Shankaracharya to mean that some perform sacrificial rites in order to gain

their desired ends, while others sacrifice the self to the Self.

26

Some yogis offer hearing and the other senses in the fire of restraint; others offer sound and other sense objects in the fire of the senses.

The first half of this verse is clear: that some discipline their senses by constant control; the second half is usually taken to mean that some renounce the objects that might excite the senses.

27

Others again offer the activity of the senses and that of the vital force in the fire of sense-control kindled by wisdom.

28

Others there are who, under strict vows, sacrifice by means of their possessions, their austerities, their yoga, their learning and their knowledge.

That is to say that some sacrifice by renouncing their possessions, some by performing austerities, some by yogic disciplines, some by concentration on scriptural texts, and some by fixing the mind in a state of knowledge.

29

Some offer the exhalation into the inhalation or the inhalation into the exhalation or restrain both inhalation and exhalation, concentrating on breath-control.

This refers to three techniques of breath-control.

30

Some, regulating their diet, offer the life-breath into the life-breath. All these understand the meaning of sacrifice and expiate their sins by it.

31

Those who eat the sacred remnants after sacrifice attain to the Eternal Brahman. (Success in) this world is not for those who make no sacrifice, how much less in another world, O Best of the Kurus.

In this verse the term 'sacrifice' must have had the meaning 'ritualistic burnt offering' at the time when the Gita was proclaimed, but it also had then and still has the meaning of restraint and giving up. The 'sacred remnants after sacrifice' can be taken not only literally but also symbolically as the legitimate activity that remains when practising self-control. The reference to success in this world has the two-fold meaning that only dedicated activity succeeds and that only he who can subordinate lesser to greater purposes succeeds.

32

Thus many forms of sacrifice are expounded in the Scriptures. Know that all of them derive from activity. Knowing this you shall attain Liberation.

33

Greater than all material sacrifice is the sacrifice through wisdom, O Scourge of the Foe. All activity without exception, O Son of Pritha, culminates in wisdom.

34

Gain this knowledge by bowing down (to your Guru), by questioning him and by serving him. The wise who have realized the Truth will teach you knowledge.

35

Know this and you will never fall thus into confusion, O Son of Pandu; through this (Knowledge) you will see all beings in the Self and also in Me.

This indicates a two-fold mode of comprehension, nontheistic and theistic: to see all beings in the Self and in God.

36

Even were you the greatest of sinners, yet should you cross over all evil on this raft of knowledge.

37

As a well lit fire consumes its fuel, Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge reduce all activity to ashes.

38

There is nothing in the world so purifying as knowledge. One who is well grounded in yoga discovers this in course of time in himself for himself.

39

One who has faith and concentration and has subdued his senses attains knowledge. Having gained knowledge he speedily attains Supreme Peace.

40

But one who is in a state of ignorance, lacking faith and doubting, perishes. Neither this world nor that beyond falls to the doubter; nor does happiness.

'Ignorance' here does not mean mere lack of information. It is ajnana, the negation of jnana (for which see the note to v. 10). By faith and concentration certitude can be attained, as stated in the previous verse; but one who lacks both certitude and faith is left with no boat to cross the flood, swept hither and thither by doubts and sense attractions.

41

He who has surrendered activity through yoga, who has destroyed doubts by certitude and who is self-possessed, O Wealth-Winner, is not bound by (the) actions (he performs).

42

Therefore with the sword of knowledge cut down this doubt born of ignorance that dwells in your heart, stand firm in yoga and rise up, O Bharata.

Here ends the Fourth Chapter entitled
The Yoga of Knowledge



REVIEWS

TEACHINGS OF JNANADEVA: By S. R. Sharma. (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7, pp. 47, price Re. 1.)

Jnanadeva (or Jnaneshwar, as he was also called) was the first of the great galaxy of Mediaeval Marathi poet-saints. He is best known for his *Jnaneshwari*, a massive and profound commentary on the Gita, but in the present book the author is concerned more with his shorter work *Anubhavamrita*, "The Elixir of Experience". In this he proclaims from experience the doctrine of Supreme Identity.

Born in 1275, Jnanadeva died in 1296, when only just over twenty. Young as he was, he felt his work on earth to be finished. He therefore ceremonially entered into samadhi, giving instructions beforehand that his body was to be bricked up, as he had no more need of it.

He declares in his Elixir:

The distinction between liberated, aspirant and bound subsists only so long as this Elixir of Experience is unknown to one.

The enjoyer and the enjoyed, the seer and the seen, are merged in the non-dual, which is indivisible.

The devotee has become God, the Goal has become the path; this indeed is solitude in the universe.

BHAJA GOVINDA: By C. Rajagopalachari. (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7, pp. 62, price Re. 1.)

In this profoundly moving poem the great Shankara not only proclaims the truth of Advaita but prescribes how to realize it. "In you, in me, elsewhere, there is but one Vishnu. Unable to

bear with me, you get angry with me in vain. See your Self in all things. Give up this false sense of difference from other beings everywhere." He insists repeatedly that it is attachments of various kinds that prevents one from waking up from the dream of separative being, and therefore these must be surrendered. Significantly enough, the very first attachment which he decries is attachment to learning. The commentary is lucid but unnecessary.

RAMAYANA FOR THE MODERN WORLD: By S. L. N. Simha. (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, pp. 118, price Rs. 2.50.)

The Ramayana is perhaps unique among world scriptures in that it does not present doctrinal theory but a pattern for living. Perhaps that is why it has always been so loved in India and so neglected abroad. S. L. N. Simha, a noted economist who has represented India on a number of international bodies, here expounds with admirable lucidity its relevance even in the world of today. In particular he shows how Rama, although the model of dharma, was no mere abstract pattern of perfection but a real man capable of impatience, anger and despondency — capable also of mastering them.

The second half of his book contains a brief synopsis of the great epic.

LIGHT ON THE ANCIENT WORLDS: By Frithjof Schuon. (Perennial Books, pp. 144, price 25s.)

In his latest book of essays F. Schuon hammers once again at his lifelong theme that traditional civilizations reposed on spiritual principles

and were therefore intrinsically superior to our modern world, which does not. This is no romantic nostalgia for the "good old days". The shortcomings of traditional civilizations are freely admitted, but it is pointed out that these resulted from incomplete fidelity to the religion on which the civilization reposed, whereas that of today reposes on none at all.

It is undoubtedly good that in a world so infatuated with itself and so sure of its superiority this viewpoint should be put. Nevertheless mere theoretical acceptance of a revised scale of social and intellectual values affords no practical help to the reader who aspires to establish true values in his own personal life and thereby raise it to a higher plane. The picture of the modern world that is held up before his eyes may even encourage hopelessness. It is to be remembered that the Puranas, while decrying the Kali Yuga as a social phenomenon, also declare that, for the individual who reacts against it, sadhana will be easier and more rapid than in the earlier and more spiritual ages. It would add to the worth of such a book to keep this also in mind.

IN THE COMPANY OF SAINTS: By K. Ramachandra. (Atma-Jyothi Nilayam, Nawalapitiya, Ceylon, pp. 184, price Rs. 4.)

The first part of Mr. Ramachandra's book is composed of anecdotes about saints, the second part of brief reflections or meditations. It shows very wide reading and catholic appreciation, ranging over saints of all religions, both ancient and modern. The opening one is of some one asking for the Maharshi's signature and being told: "Here there is no name; how then can there be a signature?" Not a book to read steadily through, but many may find it delightful to dip into.

KRISHNAVATARA, Vol. III. THE FIVE BROTHERS: By K. M. Munshi. (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, pp. 476, price Rs. 16.50.)

The first two volumes of K. M. Munshi's *Life of Krishna* were reviewed in our issue of Jan. 1965. This third volume carries the story up to Draupadi's swayamvara and her marriage to the Five Brothers. The author shows great skill in filling in the social background, bringing the various characters to life and making a fascinating story of it. Though he shows a certain nostalgia for the ancient times, he is not blind to their vices but depicts villains and ambitious schemers as well as upholders of dharma. Indeed, the main theme running through the book is the struggle

between dharma and adharma, and one feels the author's keen personal preoccupation with this. Krishna himself is represented as a brilliant and indomitable upholder of dharma, but on a purely human level; the supernatural element in him is not recognized. For those who know little of the ancient Hindu legends and traditions, these three volumes (and presumably those that are to follow) will provide as good an introduction as any, always remembering that the supernatural element is discounted far more than some interpreters would agree to.

ARTHUR OSBORNE,

THE PSYCHEDELIC EXPERIENCE — A Manual based upon the Tibetan Book of the Dead — by Timothy Leary, Ralph Metzner and Richard Alpert. (University Books, Hyde Park, New York, pp. 159. Price \$5.)

For those familiar with the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* this is a most interesting commentary even though they may not themselves intend to experiment with mescaline, LSD, psilocybin, DMT or similar drugs with a view to finding the egoless state of liberation. The authors point out that *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* is intended as advice, not to the physically dying or dead, but to the living who through meditation or austerities are able to find the ecstasy of egolessness and gradually return from it to mundane life. The authors contend that the same experience can now be attained through taking these drugs. They inform us that the session can last up to ten hours and that provided there is a good guide to assist, the maximum of liberation and joy can be obtained.

It is particularly interesting to note that at each stage it is the meddling intellect that drags the voyager back to earth. Aspirants to liberation without the use of drugs must have found over and over again that the busy intellect destroys the Clear Light of the Void quicker than any outside distraction.

The authors are very sincere in their experiments and continued to carry on even when official support was withdrawn on account of the danger of psychosis. Also, the book is clearly and simply written and contains specific directions, a modernized version of those in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, to enable the good guide to pilot the voyager through the egoless state and return to earthly life unharmed.

Furthermore, in Huxley's *Island* we see the practical possibilities of the use of these drugs to make people more satisfactory citizens. In this story Huxley paints a fascinating picture of the

use of these drugs to prevent the development of an innate dictatorship propensity in certain boys and girls. After they had used up their superfluous energy by rock climbing, they were taken into the realms of egoless eternity by a mild dose of a drug coupled with a religious ceremony conducted by a charming Mahayana Buddhist priest in a beautiful mountain temple.

The book is excellent. But what about these drugs; are they equally excellent? Even if they can achieve something more than an ersatz liberation there still remains the matter of the 'good guide'. The trouble is that the guides must themselves be conditioned by other 'good guides' and who is to start the good conditioning? While in Burma and Japan I came across two very good instructors concerning the path to liberation, but neither was infallible, and so it must always be. (We need not discuss a guide like Maharshi or Ramakrishna, not only because we should be most unlikely to find such, but because he would not be interested in drugs). The potential dictator boys and girls of Huxley's *Island* might very well be conditioned into docility by repeated doses of rock climbing cum drug cum religious ceremony, but in the hands of the wrong guide the same medicine might equally well condition them to commit the most atrocious cruelties.

Drugs (like nuclear energy) are merely another power to be used for good or evil according to who uses it, and we are still up against the insoluble problem of how we are to produce the 'good' men and women to whom it is safe to entrust power. The answer must always be that they can be found only in the ranks of those who have given up all desire for power, and these cannot be conditioned except by themselves. The Inner Light is the only guide, Light which is very hard to perceive clearly except after many years of trial and error. We can read the words of the great Spiritual Leaders, test them against each other and try them out in our own experience. We can train ourselves to be ceaselessly aware, ceaselessly mindful both of the states of our own mind and the effect we have on others. This awareness is only lessened by the use of drugs which according to all accounts give only a greater awareness that has nothing to do with a greater awareness that has nothing to do with a greater awareness here and now. After the voyager's experience of the egoless state there is no reason to suppose he would be better able to retain his equanimity if someone destroyed the notes for his Ph.D. thesis, or be any more compassionate towards the friend who let him down. It is how we improve our ability to solve little problems

like these that must decide whether the voyager is really on the path to liberation. Temporary ecstasies are of no value in themselves. Indeed they may well be a hindrance.

There are eight steps on the Buddha's practical Eightfold Path and meditation with its possible ecstasies springing from experience of the egoless state is only one of them. The Buddha himself sat at the feet of two gurus who taught him all there was to find about egoless states, but he found that these alone provided no way to liberation from suffering.

We cannot get something for nothing, and there would seem to be no short cuts to liberation. Even the sudden satori of Zen does not do away with the need for perhaps twenty years of training.

MARIE B. BYLES,

ON THE PRAYER OF JESUS: BY I. BRIANCHANINOV. Translated by Father Lazarus. (J. M. Watkins) pp. 114, price 21s.

This is a book which should be of particular interest to readers of *The Mountain Path*. The translator, Father Lazarus, is an Orthodox monk, living in India, who is already known to them, and the book itself describes a Christian method of prayer, which comes nearer to that of certain forms of Yoga than any other. The tradition of Eastern Orthodox spirituality is little known in India and deserves to be better known, as it undoubtedly has a closer affinity with Indian tradition than that of Western Christianity.

The Prayer of Jesus might be described as a form of Japa Yoga. It consists in the repetition of the words, 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner'. This formula, or mantra, as one might call it, is believed to have an extraordinary power in itself and to be able when constantly repeated to effect a complete spiritual purification. The method consists in first repeating the words aloud, so as to set up a rhythm and accustom the body to it. The second stage is to repeat the words in a whisper, concentrating the mind more and more on their inner meaning. The third stage is reached when the prayer descends to the 'heart' and the words repeat themselves continually, even during sleep, and the soul becomes totally absorbed in the prayer without the distraction of images or thoughts.

It is of interest to note that various material aids to this prayer are recommended, among which may be mentioned, sitting on a low stool (not kneeling or standing, which is more common among Christians), keeping the eyes closed or half-closed, and fixing the gaze on one point,

In this tradition it is the navel or breast which is chosen, as the seat of the prayer. It is even more interesting to find that regulation of the breathing is recommended, and even suspension of the breath. Apart from these mechanical aids, great attention is paid to the dispositions of the soul, above all humility, a deep sense of sin (which is fundamental in the Christian tradition) keeping the commandments, above all the law of charity, and constant aspiration to union with God.

This tradition of prayer goes back to a very early date. It is claimed that it goes back to Apostolic times, but it certainly began to develop from the beginning of the monastic movement in the fourth century, and culminated in the monasteries of Mount Athos in the fourteenth century, from where it spread all over the Orthodox world. It became especially famous in Russia, and one of the most moving accounts of this prayer is to be found in the *Story of a Russian Pilgrim*, translated into English by R. M. French, which tells the story of a simple Russian peasant, who wandered all over Russia in the last century, constantly repeating this prayer and attaining to extraordinary holiness through it.

DOM BEDE GRIFFITHS.

GANDHI ON NON-VIOLENCE, a Selection, edited and with an Introduction by Thomas Merton (New Directions, New York, pp. 82, \$1.75).*

The texts, carefully chosen and edited, are arranged in sections, each with a brief but clear prefatory note, so as to bring out the principles, the true and false varieties, the spiritual dimensions and the political applications of non-violence. The original and hence the most valuable part of the work is Father Merton's long introductory essay on "Gandhi and the One-Eyed Giant", a profound study in truly religious terms of the Indian leader's real success and apparent failure and of his signal service to the revival of the spirit of religion among mankind.

Valuing the spiritual traditions of the West far more highly than its material progress, Gandhi discovered through them his Indian heritage, the essential and universal element in all religions and his own "right mind". Then through his public activity in South Africa and in India he exercised and enjoyed his identity with his own people; he shared and tried to expand their spiritual consciousness. Satyagraha was the fruit of inner unity already achieved rather than a means of achieving unity. He failed, in so far as he did fail, because his followers had not reached

the inner unity he had realized in himself. Viewed only as a useful technique for attaining a practical end, satyagraha is meaningless.

The modern West is wrong in supposing that the spiritual or interior life is an exclusively private affair. Gandhi felt and proved in action that in participating in the people's struggle for justice one "liberates the truth in oneself". He would have endorsed Plato's dictum, to philosophize and concern oneself with politics is one and the same thing. Gandhi's career was active rather than contemplative. His political activity was the public practice of his religion. By the courage and reasonableness that he showed in the course of it, he established the truth that non-violence is the dharma, the very nature, of political life. Politics and the public realm were for him not secular but sacred. His work for the Harijans and for the country's freedom was his way of bearing witness to the central doctrine of Hinduism that "all life (not only of human beings but of all sentient beings) is one".

Gandhi did not evade evil, but faced it. In facing it, however, he saw its reversibility. Sin being already a punishment, what the sinner needs is compassion, not further punishment. This compassion restores "right mind to all", *sabko sanmāti*, the only way to peace on earth.

In the London *Vegetarian* of May 18, 1895 there appeared an article by Gandhi describing "the lasting holy impression" produced on his mind by a visit to a Trappist monastery at Pinetown in South Africa. This article concluded with the ringing declaration, "If this is Roman Catholicism, then everything said against it is a lie". And now, seventy years later, Thomas Merton, master of contemplation and author of "Ascent to Truth", returns the compliment and in this study of karma-yoga seems to say: "If this is Hinduism, then everything said against it is a lie."

K. SWAMINATHAN

THE PHILOSOPHICAL POTENTIAL OF INDIAN ESOTERICISM: By Agehananda Bharati. Pub: Indian Renaissance Institute, 6, Fair Field Road No. 4, Churchgate, Bombay-1. Pp. 34. Price: Rs. 2.00.

This is more an introductory than an exhaustive treatise on the interpretation of certain esoteric ideologies of Indian philosophy, notably of the Tantras. Indian philosophy, whether Vedantic, Tantric or Buddhist, is traditionally

* \$1.75 in the publisher's note, \$1.50 on the book-jacket.

spiritual-oriented ; its aim is to seek God, to seek *moksha* or *nirvana*. So deep-rooted is this aim that it pervades not only the theological discussions but practically every category of Indian thought, intellectual, aesthetic, artistic, philological, mathematical or any other.

In this monograph the author has attempted to divest philosophy of its theological or religious association in order to study Indian esoterics exclusively by methods of modern linguistic analysis — a system which is intellectual, language-oriented and value-free.* Now a value-free philosophy may have its own value to its protagonists and there cannot be any quarrel about it. But this must be said that the Indian tradition has generally held in high esteem the esoterism of its teachings and practices. Dayanand's attempt to find 72,000 ducts in a corpse (P. 25) or his disgust with image worship are rather an exception than a rule. True, the tradition withholds its expositions from the laity which goes to show the importance it attaches to the occult or esoteric significance of its symbols, language or thought.

The author's explanations of the concepts involved in *rati sadhana*, *urddhvaretas* etc. are open to question in places; his attitude to other possible approaches leaves much to be desired.

M. P. PANDIT.

✓
SHRIMAD BHAGAVATA (condensed) : By S. S. Cohen (Chinmaya Publication Trust, Bombay. Pp. XV and 360. Price not stated.)

In a span of about 360 pages Mr. Cohen has tried to summarise the vast contents of Shrimad Bhagavata, the most popular and important Purana, originally composed in Sanskrit. It is the creation of Vyasa or Badarayana and contains the dialogue between Parikshit (sure to die within a week as the result of a curse by a Sage's son) and Suka, the great Yogi and son of Vyasa. Suka's instructions prepared the king for death as he realized his identity with the immortal Brahman. It contains stories within stories and is hence complicated. To condense such a mighty work is certainly a difficult task, but the author, working with devotion, has done it admirably, considering even his own limitations.

In the introduction he has pointed out the greatness of the original Purana, its distinguishing features and its superiority in certain respects to other scriptures. While condensing he has attempted (as he says), 'to bring out all the stories and the instructions given in the original,

curtailing nothing but the least significant anecdotes, long lists of names which mean nothing to us to-day, constant iterations of ideas, hymns and accounts of the creation, and details which are likely to cause a flagging interest in the modern reader'. The work certainly bears testimony to all this.

The Bhagavata is a mine of parables and the author has, in this condensation, thoroughly maintained the interest of these stories along with the main current of the theme, without losing sight of the philosophy contained in them. Particularly noteworthy is the life of Sri Krishna (Book Tenth) which is the chief attraction of the main work. He has faithfully preserved the charm of the original. The style is lucid, the descriptions graphic and the details finely worked out.

One cannot, however, ignore the fact that the poetic beauties of the original, the musical cadence and its verse cannot be translated or condensed. Hence some portion has become rather dull in spite of the author's vigilant care. Also his English, though lively and vigorous, is often ungrammatical.

In spite of this, Mr. Cohen has done a great service to modern readers who are interested in this great scripture and who have neither the leisure nor the capacity to go through the original tome. The book deserves to be read and re-read. It is dedicated to "The ever-effulgent Shri Ramana"!

✓
ATMA-BODHA OF SRI SANKARACHARYA, Edited by Vaidyaratna P. N. Menon. Published by The Educational Supplies Depot, Palghat-1. Second edition. Price Rs. 4.50.

Here is a very useful edition of Atma-Bodha, one of the important monographs of Sri Sankara. In this edition the editor has given an exhaustive Introduction running to about eighty pages, dealing with Sankara's life, works, philosophy, the nature and contents of Atma-Bodha. He has discussed the difficult problem of Sankara's date and his works and has given his own conclusions which appeal to reason and traditional belief. While dealing with his philosophy, he has analysed it in its chief aspects of theology, cosmology, psychology and eschatology and has shown its distinctive features. He has also discussed in brief the merits and demerits of Sankara's system

* By "Value-free" is meant a study of the subject for its own sake and not any result or *purushartha*.

and has finally dwelt on the supreme value of a work like this in modern times of spiritual decadence. All this shows a close critical study by the editor and his missionary zeal.

The text is accompanied by a rare Sanskrit commentary 'Pradeep' by Srimat Krishnanandasami Swami (himself a religious head with some following), English word-meaning, translation and explanation in English based on the commentary. The index of all the verses arranged alphabetically is given at the end.

Thus this edition serves a useful purpose both for those who are knowers of Sanskrit, and those who are not, in fact for all who are interested in the Vedantic philosophy of Sankara.

Unfortunately there are a few misprints. The editor should have given an 'Errata' at the beginning of the work. Nevertheless, Sri Menon deserves hearty congratulations for bringing out a nice second edition of this excellent Prakaranagrantha of Sankara.

ADVAITA RASAMANJARI OF SADASHIV BRAHMENDRA: By Vidyaratna P. N. Menon, published by The Educational Supplies Depot, Palghat-1. First Edition 1965. Price Rs. 2.50.

Like the Atmabodha, Advaita Rasamanjari of Sadashiv Brahmendra, is the poetic outpouring of a realized soul. Jnana or understanding as the sole means of realization is the common standpoint of both. Advaita Rasamanjari is virtually and in all senses the blossoming of non-duality. The book contains only forty-four verses and every verse is a thing of beauty, giving not only joy but instruction to the seeker. The poetic images that the seer-poet has given are fresh and original, couched in fresh and lucid words. To quote a few:

"The ascetic who has attained the state of seeing all as Brahma resorts yet to samadhi enjoyed by him earlier merely for whiling away time. *Indeed an emperor who has enough of all prosperity resorts yet to the game of dice for passing time*". (page 96).

"The power of worldly objects, though extremely wonderful, does not delight the steadfast who has known their real nature. *A man dressed in the garb of a woman is indeed unable with his amorous graces to infatuate even a youth who knows his true nature*". (page 116).

A distinctive feature of this edition is the rare Sanskrit commentary of Sri Krishnanandasami on this work. At once simple and delightful, it is clear, expository and scholarly. Sri Menon's English Translation of the verses and the notes

based on the Sanskrit commentary are equally authentic and useful for a layman. Readers will remain grateful to him for his zeal and ability shown in preparing this edition of a delightful work. Only they would wish that he had exercised more control over the printing.

PROF. G. V. KULKARNI

VEDANTA IN TEN VERSES (DASASLOKI) OF SRI SANKARACARYA: By T. M. P. Mahadevan and N. Veezhinathan. (Sankara Vihar, 25 Trust Square, Madavakkam Tank Road, Madras-12).

The work under review is a short manual by Adi Sankara dealing with the nature of the Atman. It is always of considerable difficulty to comprehend what the Atman really is. The true Self which is the same as Brahman can only be described negatively as not this, not this and so on. What is later left unsublated is the Self. This is the central theme of this work. When Sankara as a boy went to his Guru, Govinda Bhagavatpadha, he was asked, "Who are you"? This composition comprising ten Slokas was the reply to that question. This work by Sankara called *Dasasloki* has been selected by the learned Editors for publication and this is also aptly the tenth number in the Jayanti series. The Notes appended to the Slokas are clear and sufficiently comprehensive for the correct understanding of the text. The Acharya of Kamakoti Pitham has blessed this work with his *Srimukham*. The book will be found extremely useful for aspirants who seek for knowledge of the Atman.

CONCEPT OF VIVEKA IN THE BHAGAVAD GITA: By G. V. Kulkarni, Re. 1.

This book is an article and in the words of the author "devoted to observe how and where the concept of Viveka occurs in the Geeta". It also attempts, as he tells us, to examine the relation between Viveka and the philosophy of work. It is a bit puzzling to be told that "the philosophy of work is considered Vedantic."

The author points out that the word Viveka (discrimination) never occurs in the Gita, but that its import occurs in various forms in the Gita. He classifies the significance of this word as occurring in the Gita as follows: (1) Discrimination between that which exists and that which does not exist, (2) Discrimination between that which is eternal and that which is not, (3) Discrimination between the field and the knower of the field, (4) Discrimination between Purusha and Prakriti, (5) Discrimination between the

mutable and the immutable Purusha. Under each of these headings, the author gives specific references from the Gita. In the last part of the essay, the difference between the Sankhya doctrine of the Purusha and the Gita doctrine is discussed. He finally notes the sense in which two terms, *Sankhya* and *Yoga* are used in the Gita.

The essay is a learned one and the author has taken considerable pains in analytically studying and compiling his material. But one wishes that he had followed the standardised principles in writing Samskrit words in the English script. The statement made by the writer in the beginning that he would examine the relation between viveka and karma has not been done well. Also the distinction between Sankhya and Yoga as systems of philosophy and the sense in which these two terms are used in the Gita as contrasted with their usage in the Mahabharata could have been more specific.

S. RAJAGOPALA SASTRI.

AN INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM: By H.H.

The Dalai Lama, (Tibet House, 16 Jor Bagh, New Delhi, pp. 31, price not stated.)

A thirty page introduction to Buddhism is necessarily elementary. Nevertheless, so essentially is Buddhism regarded by Tibetans as a discipline of life that even this brief statement may seem too technical to some who have learnt it only as theory from books. While elucidating the basic doctrine, it is more concerned with practice. Indeed, the author sets the tone on the very first page by declaring that "no other pleasure can be compared with that derived from spiritual practice."

The attempt to prove anatta in a single page is unfortunate and overlooks the fact that whether there is no 'I' or a universal and eternal 'I' may be a question of semantics. On the whole, however, this is a brilliant condensation of Buddhist doctrine and Tibetan Buddhist training.

BUDDHISM IN THAILAND, ITS PAST AND

PRESENT: By Karuna Kusalasaya. (Wheel Publication No. 85/86, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Ceylon, pp. 30, price not stated.)

This little book gives a workmanlike account of Buddhism in Thailand. On archaeological evidence, it traces the existence of Theravada Buddhism in the country back to the 3rd century B.C.

There is a pleasing description of the organization of the Sangha and the role it plays in the life of the country. Particularly the custom of temporary monkhood acquaints a very large proportion of the men with the tenets of Buddhism and the practices of monasticism. It also establishes a link between many, perhaps most, families and the Sangha.

The author refers on the one hand to the prevailing wind of modern materialism and on the other to the attempts now being made to reinvigorate Buddhist life and teaching.

BODHICHITTA.

PERIODICALS

A new quarterly entitled *SAIVA SIDDHANTA*, edited by N. Murugesu Mudaliar, contains learned articles by outstanding academic authorities. It is the organ of "The Saiva Siddhanta Mahasamajam" of Madras which has for many years been publishing a Tamil periodical.

HERMES is a new French bi-annual edited by Jaques Masui and dedicated "to the inner life in connection with mystical experience and creative intuition and to methods of spiritual Realization and traditional disciplines of Yoga, Zen, Sufism, etc." With an Advisory Board including such names as Giuseppe Tucci, Alan Watts, Edward Conze and Charles Luk, one can expect great things of it.

We have received the inaugural *NEWSLETTER* of the R. M. Bucke Memorial Society for the study of religious experience, edited by Graham B. Taylor from Montreal. It is concerned with the important modern tendency to collaboration between psychology and religion in the study of mysticism. It is supported by eminent scholars and maintains a high standard in its discussions and reviews.

ADHYATMA SAROJ, the new monthly organ of the Institute of Psychic and Spiritual Research, has competent articles and an impressive editorial board, though the size of the magazine is a good deal less than one would have expected. Having each issue devoted to a separate theme—yoga, astrology, tantra and so on—it is due to run into the same difficulty as ourselves when it finds the broad general themes already used up.

NEW RACE is a new quarterly edited by V. Madhusudan Reddy from Hyderabad. It mainly expounds the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

to it. Copies are available from Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal Sath Sangham, 38, Venkatesapuram Colony, Ayanavaram, Madras-23. The annual subscription is Rs. 2, single copies being priced at 50 paise. The quarterly has been given the appropriate name of BHAGYA BHARANI.

With P. K. Sundaram as editor, a bilingual quarterly (English and Tamil) has just been launched by the followers of Sri-la-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal, about whom there is an article in this issue of *The Mountain Path*. While mainly devoted to Hindu traditions, it intends to range over wider fields also. We see from the inaugural issue that writers of repute are contributing

It is an extraordinary sign of the swelling tide of spiritual investigation in the world today that in one single issue of THE MOUNTAIN PATH we should have to take notice of six new ventures in this direction. We welcome all such manifestations of opposition to the materialism and superficiality of the modern world.

NOTICE

Sometimes we receive complaints of non-receipt of the journal rather late. Copies are posted to subscribers in the first week of January, April, July and October every year and should reach our subscribers in India by the second week at the latest.

We request readers to notify us of non-receipt before the end of the month of publication in the case of readers in India and within three months in the case of readers overseas. *Delayed complaints of non-receipt will not be attended to.*

Sometimes readers do not notify us of change of address in time and subsequently complain of non-receipt. We request readers to notify us of change of address so as to reach us one week ahead of the month of despatch. Otherwise we cannot be responsible for loss in transit.

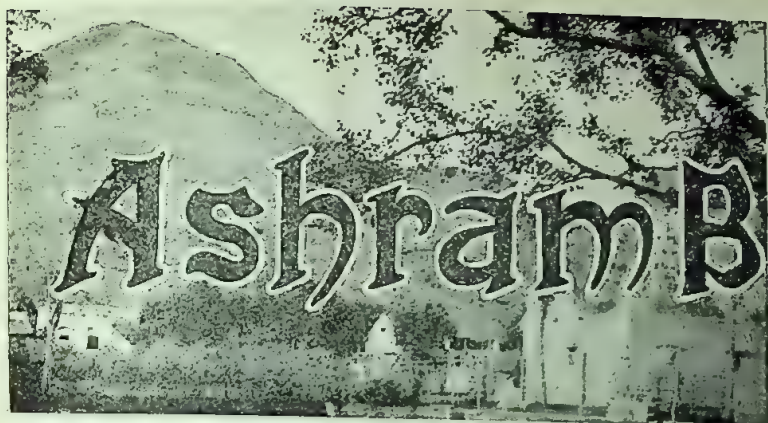
Subscribers abroad are requested not to send the subscription in currency notes, but either by International Money Order, British Postal Order or cheque or draft on any bank in India, U.S.A. and U.K. They should be drawn in favour of *The Mountain Path* only.

Receipts for subscriptions are sent only with the journal and not separately.

Subscribers whose subscriptions end with the current issue for April are requested to renew for the next year to end with the issue for October 1967 at proportional rates, as this would greatly facilitate our accounting and also help bring the subscriptions in line with the year of the journal.

April 1, 1966.

V. GANESAN,
Managing Editor.



Ashram Bulletin

DEEPAM

Deepam, the festival when a beacon is lit on the summit of Arunachala at sunset, fell on 7th December this time, too late for inclusion in our January Bulletin. For two weeks the north-east monsoon had been raging, with low clouds covering the hill and with driving rain. That afternoon the sky cleared and the peak stood out for all below to see the beacon light. Next morning the sky was again overcast and the hill veiled in cloud.

JAYANTI

Bhagavan's birth anniversary according to the Tamil calendar was late this year, falling on Jan. 7th. Owing to an electric power cut in Madras, the printing of *The Mountain Path* was also late and the copies reached here only just in time for Jayanti. The ritual was mainly the same as last year. Again the Lt. Governor of Pondicherry came for the occasion.

After Om Sadhu's rendering of Sri Ramana Gitam there was a music recital by Sri T. P. Subramaniam of Madras and his party. In the evening Brahmasri Jagadisa Iyer and his party gave a bhajan

Among the distinguished guests and foreign visitors were Prof. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Prof. K. Subrahmanyam, Prof. Rafael Carmona Lozada, Mrs. Jean Butler, Mr. and Mrs. de Mello, Mrs. Vera Hedenlo from Sweden, Miss Sarah Ferrand of London, Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami, Sri Framji Dorabji, Mr. and Mrs. Satya Narayan Tandon, Soori Nagamma, A. R. Narayana Rao and family, J. V. Somayajulu and family, Mrs. Khosla, Yogiswara Sri Lakshmana of Chillakur.

BOMBAY

A big thing was made of the Jayanti celebrations in Bombay this year. With N. D. Sahukar as the distinguished chairman, a Sri Ramana Jayanti Celebration Committee was formed and three public meetings organized. Mr. and Mrs. Osborne went specially from Tiruvannamalai to address them. The first, on 19th February, was held at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan with its venerable founder-president, Kulapati Dr. K. M. Munshi, presiding. Mrs. Mani Sahukar and Mrs. Osborne also spoke. The second was held next day at the Ramakrishna Ashram under the presidentship of its head, Swami Sambuddhananda. The Swami also spoke and told of a darshan that he once had with Sri Ramana Maharshi. The third meeting was held the following day at the Cowasji Jehangir Hall with the Hon. T. S. Bharde, Speaker of the Maharashtra Assembly, presiding. Here again Mrs. Sahukar and Mrs. Osborne spoke.

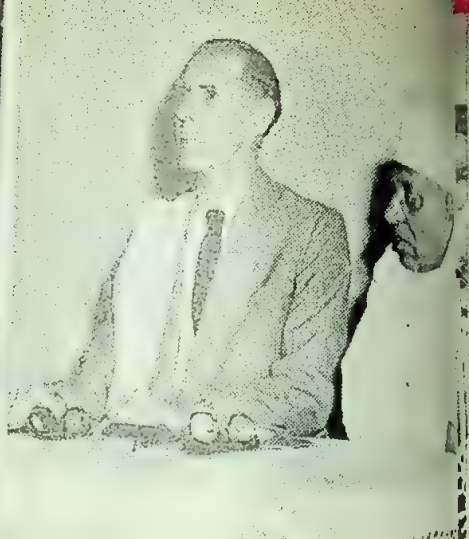
All three meetings drew large and appreciative audiences. In fact the halls were packed to capacity.

The press gave favourable reports both of the meetings and the speakers.

Apart from these public meetings, Mr. Osborne also addressed the Yoga Institute at Santa Cruz, a private gathering at the house of Mrs. Handoo and a group of Tamil devotees out at Chembur.

There were so many requests for private interviews and social meetings that scarcely any free time remained.

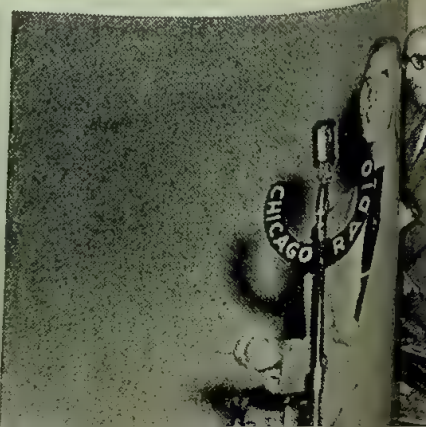
Arrangements were made with the New Book Co., of Hornby Road and the Popular Book Depot, Bombay-7 to stock *The Mountain Path* and with the International Book Co., of Ash Lane, Bombay, to display a copy and book subscriptions.



Top: Dr. K. M. Munshi garlands the portrait of Sri Maharshi before inaugurating the Ramana Jayanti Celebrations meeting. Mr. Osborne and Sri Swami Sambuddhananda.
Middle: Mr. Osborne enunciating the teachings of Sri Maharshi. Also seen are: Mrs. Osborne (talking). Mr. N. D. Sahukar, Dr. K. M. Munshi and Smt. Leelavathi Munshi.



Bottom: Hon. T. S. Bharade, Speaker of the Maharashtra Assembly addressing the gathering Mr. Osborne in a jovial mood.





Top: Sri P. V. Somasundaram reading the messages; Mr. K. K. Nambiar, Mr. Osborne and Sri Swami Sambuddhananda are also seen. Mrs. Osborne's speech was well received.

P. V. Somasundaram, the Secretary of the Sri Ramana Jayanti Celebration Committee, was a dynamo of energy and an enthusiastic and loyal worker and was largely responsible for the great success of the campaign.

This is the first time that *The Mountain Path* has carried out any such enterprise and it succeeded beyond all expectations. It took place, very appropriately, in Bombay, which has always been the most appreciative and enthusiastic town in its support of Bhagavan and his Ashram. Now that a beginning has been made we hope that further such activities will follow in other towns and countries.

On leaving Bombay, Mr. and Mrs. Osborne broke their return journey at Poona, where they called at the Hari Krishna Mandir to visit Dilip Kumar Roy (Dadaji) and Indira Devi (Didiji). Their reception was not only cordial but affectionate. They attended a bhajan in which they found that Dadaji's voice, at 70, still retained its

power and beauty and wide range. After the singing, both Mr. and Mrs. Osborne spoke about Bhagavan. They discovered later that their speeches had been tape-recorded. The prayer hall and an adjacent room were packed, and the audience was not only large but appreciative. After the speeches, Dadaji warmly recommended the listeners to subscribe to *The Mountain Path*.

The Mandir, both house and garden, is a perfect gem, designed by Didiji. In one of her exquisite rock-gardens is a statuette of Sai Baba in a specially constructed grotto. It was presented by a devotee and Didiji put it away in a cupboard. A few days later some one knocked at the door after dark and, on opening, who should Didiji see standing there but Sai Baba himself, Sai Baba who died in 1918!

"Why do you put the faqir in a cupboard?" he demanded.

She quickly took it out and next day established it in its grotto. A typical Sai Baba story.

Bottom: Sri N. D. Sahukar, Chairman of the Jayanthi Committee speaking. A portion of the appreciative audience.



RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

The 86th Birthday Anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was celebrated in the Sri Vinayaka Mandir Hall on January 9, 1966.

After pooja, Veda parayana and Upadesa Undi-yar, a five-minute silence was observed. Songs by Bhagavan and by Muruganar and Sadhu Om were sung.

Sri C. R. Pattabhiraman, Deputy Minister of Information and Broadcasting, recounted some incidents at Ramanasramam during his visits there with his distinguished father Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Iyer. He commended silent meditation.

Sri K. K. Nambiar and Dr. K. Arumugham, Reader in Tamil, Delhi University, also spoke.

A film showing Bhagavan in the Asramam was shown by Sri K. K. Nambiar.

People interested in contacting the Ramana Kendra at Delhi should write to: The Secretary, Ramana Kendra, 120 Kaka Nagar, New Delhi-11.

LONDON

SRI RAMANA DEVOTION CENTRE

About fifty devotees met at the residence of Dr. C. H. Sharma (101 Seymour Place, London, W.1) on January 8th to pay homage to Sri Bhagavan on the occasion of his Jayanti. We chose the 8th, a Saturday, as the 7th was a working day. The meeting unanimously decided to found an organization known as "Sri Ramana Devotion Centre" and elected the following executive committee:

Dr. C. H. Sharma	—	Chairman
N. Vasudevan	—	Joint Chairman
T. R. Nicoll	}	Secretaries
W. H. Williams		
Miss Lawes	—	Treasurer
Mrs. Robinson	—	Member
Miss M. A. Ayers	—	Member

After a welcoming address there was half an hour's silent meditation. Dr. Sharma then spoke about Sri Bhagavan and his Ashram. Sqn. Ldr. Vasudevan gave one or two instances of Bhagavan's sense of humour. Two other devotees told how Bhagavan had come into their lives.

HYDERABAD

The New Era Institute of Hyderabad celebrated Ramana Jayanti at Tagore's Home, Secunderabad, on 6th January. On the 9th the Sri Ramana Bhakta Mandal held a public celebration at the

Gujerati High School, Rashtrapathi Road, Secunderabad. His Holiness Jagadguru Sri Trivikrama Ramananda Bharati Swamigal Siddheswara Peedadhipati, Kourtalam, kindly consented to preside. Sri K. N. Anantharaman, Chief Secretary of the Government of Andhra Pradesh, was among the speakers.

CALICUT

The 86th birth anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramana was celebrated at the Sri Sai Baba Mission Bhajan Mandir, Calicut, on the evening of 7th Jan. before a large gathering of Bhagavan's devotees. Namajapa, parayana of Bhagavan's Upadesa Sara, recitation of Ramana stuti, Guru-puja were the chief items of the programme. Dr. M. Anandan, Secretary of the Sai Baba Mandir, who organized the celebrations, introduced the speaker of the evening, Sri Kuttikrishna Marar, a learned Sanskrit Pandit of the place. Leaflets containing six verses selected by Bhagavan from the Yoga Vasishta were distributed at the end, together with prasadam.

KOPPAM

Sri Ramana Jayanti was celebrated here for four days. There were pujas and Archanas in the morning and Gita Parayan, Bhajan and discourses in the evening. On the 7th January Sri P. Achuthan, gave a very good talk on Bhagavan's unique position as a Jivanmukta. On the 8th there was a brilliant talk on Upadesa Saram by Sri M. M. Menon, retired Professor. On the 9th Sri Easwara Iyer, gave us a lucid account of the main incidents of Bhagavan's life with some interesting anecdotes. On the last day there was an instructive and illuminating discourse on 'Sad Darsana' by Sri G. Balakrishnan Nair.

T. T. NAGAR

Ramana Jayanti was celebrated in T. T. Nagar under the auspices of Sri Chambal Bharati with Sri N. P. Bhoosan presiding. Before the speeches there was chanting of the Upanishads. Sri S. P. Tiwari and Sri Dattatraya Gurge spoke. The date according to the Western calendar was taken for the celebration.

KOLHAPUR

The Dharma-Tatvajnana-Mandal here celebrated the 86th Jayanti of Maharshi Ramana on January 7th, with bhajan, meditation and prayers. Pandit Khuperkar Sastri and Prof. G. V. Kulkarni

spoke. The Presence and Grace of Bhagavan was felt.

TIRUCHUZH

The house, in which Sri Bhagavan was born, Sri Sundara Mandiram, was a place of inspiration, joy and festivities on the 7th January. The 86th Birthday was befittingly celebrated, with special poojas, in the midst of a large gathering of devotees and visitors.

MOUNTAIN PATH NEWS

Readers will have noticed that the editorials of our first nine issues, that is up to January 1966, form a connected series on the general theme of quest and guidance. From the present issue onwards they will be on separate subjects, not in any sequence.

Our next issue will be mainly on the theme of *REINCARNATION*, that of October on *SYMBOLISM*.

* * *

We have decided from now on to quote our ever-growing list of life subscribers only once a year, that is in the January issue.

* * *

PICTURES OF BHAGAVAN

There are many beautiful and expressive photographs of Bhagavan that are not in the Ashram archives. Any persons who have photos that have not appeared in *The Mountain Path* are requested either to make copies and send to the Ashram or to send the originals so that copies can be made here. The originals will be kept only a few days and then returned safely.

VISITORS

We have had a wider range of visitors than usual this time. It included Dr. T. Margul, a student and teacher of philosophy from Communist Poland, who, on arrival here, was better versed in Hindu theory than we had expected, and on leaving had decided to try practice also. It included also Dr. Alfonso Caycedo L., a psychiatrist from Colombia in South America, with his charming wife. Dr. McCullough, who teaches philosophy at San Jose College, California, was already a subscriber to *The Mountain Path* before coming here.

* * *

Douglas Harding has twice written fascinating articles for *The Mountain Path*, so he was no stranger to us. His understanding and charm of manner made him a much loved visitor. We were disappointed that Helen could not come too. However, what we found most interesting was his report that three more persons in his small group of friends in England have now also had an awakening similar to Helen's. The most reassuring sign is his appreciation that such an awakening is not the end but the beginning of the journey.

Mr. Douglas Harding

The spiritual vitality of Jean Butler is sufficiently evident from the article she has contributed to this issue. We are very glad to have her with us here. At the very last minute an attempt was made to keep her away but, having arrived and felt the potency of Bhagavan's Presence here, she



Mrs. Jean Butler

intends to make a long stay.

Mr. Smith, a retired businessman from the south coast of England, is now on his second visit here. He writes: "When a friend in England lent me a book containing a radiant portrait with that unique timeless quality the impact and reaction was spontaneous. Later there followed a period of stress which led to my visiting the Ashram of Sri Ramana Maharshi without due preparation. I stayed for a month in December-January 1964-65 and did the customary things — walking round Arunachala, climbing to the top of it, visiting Virupaksha and Skandashram caves and so on. The novel surroundings with the Maharshi's samadhi, the temple, the meditation hall and the lives and aspirations of the working devotees

made a powerful impression on me and I returned to England considerably refreshed.

"I return this year more at my ease, having friends to greet me. Much painting and whitewashing has been done and the premises look bright and clean. And I enjoy looking up at Arunachala from my door and window. My needs and comforts have all been attended to and a circuit of the Hill, avoiding the heat of the day, had already been arranged.

"I find the Maharshi's samadhi in an interesting phase of construction, with palm tree trunks being used as uprights to hoist the heavy granite pillars into position. The carving of the gray stone pillars intrigues me and the polished black finish of some of them is beautiful. I find the atmosphere of devotion uplifting and trust that the influence of Arunachala will sink deep within for my return.

"Sri Ramana Ashram bestows its own special blessing — of which it can only be said that he whose samskaras lead him there will partake of the kindness and fraternal affection which is the overflowing of the spirit of Shri Ramana, manifest in the good people there who devote their lives to the service of the devotees, the upkeep and management of the Ashram."

Mr. Maskew was here previously at the same time as Mr. Smith and after being away for a year has returned at the same time. Him also we welcome cordially.

"He who wishes to make a spiritual retreat will find no better place than the slopes of Arunachala, and within the Ashram he will find, if he chooses the silence and solitude he seeks. Those who run the Ashram have the spiritual finesse of respecting the liberty of the visitor, the understanding of his needs, and the giving of every help," says Mr. Maskew.

AU REVOIR

Dr. Hugo Maier (for whom see our *Ashram Bulletin* of July, 1964 issue), who is a permanent resident of our Ashram, has left for his home in Germany, only to come back to the Ashram after a few months. We bid him *au revoir*. We will miss him and his unreserved help and assistance. It is the wish of all that he returns soon.

SRI VIDYA HAVAN

Sri Vidya Homam took place on the 18th March this year and was performed with all the pujas and ceremonies, so much so that the actual Sri Chakra Puja had to be held over to the following day. There was an atmosphere of great devotion, and traditional rituals were performed.



with much beauty. A constant and increasing number of devotees are availing themselves of the Sri Chakra Puja inaugurated on March 17th, 1949 by Bhagavan and perpetuated by the good offices of (late) Major A. W. Chadwick. This anniversary has now become one of the great days of the Ashram.

OBITUARY

SOMERSET MAUGHAM

Although by no means dedicated to a spiritual life, the late Somerset Maugham was one of those who helped to make the Maharshi widely known. He came here for a brief visit in 1939, after which he wrote the novel *'The Razor's Edge'* presenting a highly fictionalised picture of Bhagavan. Towards the end of his life in *'Points of View'* he gave an account of the principle influences on his life, and one chapter of the book, entitled *'The Saint'* was about Bhagavan.

Since various stories of his visit here have been put abroad, we quote here that given by

Major Chadwick from his own firsthand observation in his book '*A Sadhu's Reminiscences of Ramana Maharshi*'. "In March 1939 Somerset Maugham came to the Ashram. Many accounts have been given of his visit and all of them different. As I was the principal person concerned in looking after him, I have decided to give my own version. He was brought to the Ashram by a friend of mine, Mrs. Austin, wife of the Collector of Madras. The party had first gone to the dak bungalow to have their lunch, but finding it full had come on to the Ashram. They asked me whether I could find somewhere for them where they could have the meal they had brought with them. I arranged for one of the small rooms near my own. As I had already had my meal, at their request I sat and talked with them while they ate. Somerset Maugham asked innumerable questions about my life and the Ashram, apologizing for his inquisitiveness.

"At the end of the meal, which they had taken on the verandah, with Somerset Maugham sitting more or less in the sun, he fainted. Many absurd stories were circulated to account for this; that he had seen Bhagavan and this was a state of samadhi brought on by the meeting and such like. Actually he had not seen Bhagavan at all. It was probably a slight sun-stroke, though he himself said that he had been liable to such black-outs occasionally since birth.

"We carried him to my room and laid him on my bed. I then went to Bhagavan and told him what had happened and asked him, when he went out for his stroll at about 2 o'clock, to come to my room and see Somerset Maugham who was now unfit to come to the Hall, and Bhagavan agreed.

"I met Bhagavan on the way and as we approached my room Somerset Maugham was just coming out; he said that he now felt better and was on his way to the hall. I told him to go back into the room and sit down, as Bhagavan had come to him there instead. Bhagavan and Somerset Maugham sat opposite to each other for about half an hour without uttering a word. At the end of which Somerset Maugham looked nervously across in my direction and said, 'Is there any need to say anything?' 'No,' replied Bhagavan, 'Silence is best. Silence is itself conversation.' After some further period Bhagavan turned to me and in his child-like way said: 'I think I had better be going, they will be looking for me.' As no one in the Ashram knew where he had gone except the attendant who always accompanied him, this was correct. The interview

lasted about forty-five minutes. After Bhagavan had returned to the Hall the rest of the party remained in my room for tea. After tea Somerset Maugham, who was wearing a large pair of boots, wanted to go to the Hall and see where Bhagavan usually lived. I took him to the western window through which he looked for some time with interest making mental notes. He says in his indifferent and quite uninspired article '*The Saint*', published in a series of essays twenty years after the event, that he sat in the Hall in Bhagavan's presence, but this is untrue, because he could not enter with his boots; he only gazed into the hall from outside. He also tacked a certain amount of philosophy on to Bhagavan which Bhagavan could never have uttered in his life. But such is the habit of famous authors, to put their own opinions into the mouths of others.

"In this recent article Somerset Maugham says that because of his fainting fit, which some Indians regarded as a high state of samadhi, which he denies, he has been sent a mass of literature concerning the Maharshi. This may be true, but it is certainly true that he wrote to the Ashram and told them that he was going to write about Bhagavan and asked for as much material as they could send." (pp. 45-47)

ALAMELU AMMAL

Smt. Alamelu Ammal was a familiar figure at the Ashram, where she could be seen working in the temple, morning and evening. She passed away on 15th January at the age of 75. She had been working in the temple till evening, making kolam patterns for the festival of Pongal. Later in the evening she called her sister and some neighbours to chant the names of Ramana and Arunachala with her, and at about 11 o'clock at night she quite suddenly passed away.

Born in Vaikom, she was married at the age of ten, as was usual in those days and almost immediately lost her husband, becoming a widow. She learnt several languages and worked for some time as a teacher at Bangalore. She came to Bhagavan quite early, when he was still living at Skandashram, before the present ashram was built. Twenty-five years ago she bought a small house in Ramana Nagar, just near the Ashram and settled down there, doing various kinds of service for the Ashram. She has left the house to the Ashram.

May Sri Bhagavan bless her and gather her to his feet.

SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

SADHU VASWANI

Apr

In our previous issue we had to note the passing of the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. In this issue we have to record that he has been closely followed by the Vice-President, Swami Yatiswarananda.

Born in Bengal in 1889, the Swami became a disciple of Swami Brahmananda Maharaj, one of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. He became widely known as a writer and editor, an administrator and a spiritual guide. Not only did he hold high positions in the Order in India, but he represented it in various foreign countries including England and the U.S.A. He has been its Vice-President since 1962. From 1950 up to the time of his death he was the President of its Bangalore branch.

Sadhu Vaswani, who passed away on January 16th at the age of 87, was a widely known and much loved figure. Most of his life had been devoted to spiritual and cultural teaching. For many years past he had been publishing his reflections in the form of a periodical. He had a wide circle of followers, with whom we sympathise.

FORTHCOMING FESTIVALS

Bhagavan's 16th Mahanirvana Day falls for celebration on the 18th of April this year and Maha Puja — the anniversary of Mother's Samadhi — on the 12th of June.

Analysis of the Horoscope of Maharshi Ramana

By L. K. BANERJI

This delineation of the character of Sri Ramana is in response to the invitation in the Jayanti number of *The Mountain Path* to send comments on his horoscope. A full discussion of all the planets and of all the twelve houses of the natal chart may be boring to the majority of readers. I shall, therefore, touch upon the salient features only of his life and personality.

The first house or the rising sign (Lagna) is, as it were, the window through which the soul looks out on the world. Let us therefore consider the rising sign of Maharshi Ramana first. It is Libra (Tula), the sign of the balance. The main characteristic of Libra persons is Equilibrium. Libra also confers upon its subjects a sweet and gentle nature. The Lagna is untenanted but it is in its own Navamsa (ninth-part) Libra and consequently carries with it the good effect of a Vargottam Navamsa (the best ninth-part) of a Lagna. The renowned astrologer Varahamihir says — "*Subham Vargottame Janma*". The expression means that, birth in a Vargottam Navamsa is auspicious. Whether he refers to the Lagna or to the Moon by the word "Janma", the dictum covers the case of Maharshi as his Moon is also in Vargottam Navamsa being in the sign Gemini (Mithuna) both in Rasi and in Navamsa. The ascendant Libra receives the trine aspect of the philosophical planet Jupiter from the fifth house, the house of deep devotion to deities (Deva Bhakti). Venus, the lord of the

rising sign, is in the second house along with Mercury, the planet of intellect. The latter planet is the lord of the ninth and twelfth houses, i.e., the houses of righteousness and of renunciation. If in a horoscope, the lords of the first and ninth houses are found in the same sign without being joined with or aspected by any other planet, this position alone makes the native a good-natured and a God-fearing person. In the case before us, these two planets receive the aspect of Mars, the lord of the house where they are situated. The aspect of Mars is usually considered to be evil but as the sign aspected is his own, he, like a human being, does not do any injury either to the house or to the occupants thereof. On the other hand, he becomes friendly with them and enhances their good effects.

The Sun and the shadowy planet Rahu are in the third house — the house of fortitude. We all know how the Maharshi endured the excruciating pains of cancer with stoic calmness. According to the Western astrologers, this house has a definite influence over the mind. The Sun here makes the mind lofty and magnanimous and his protege firm and self-reliant in all mental pursuits. The sage-astrologer Jaimini thinks that it is the Sun which makes one proficient in Vedanta. The said planet being further situated in Sagittarius (Dhanus), a sign of the all-wise Jupiter, has made Maharshi a Vedanta incarnate. It must have been the joint influence of these two planets

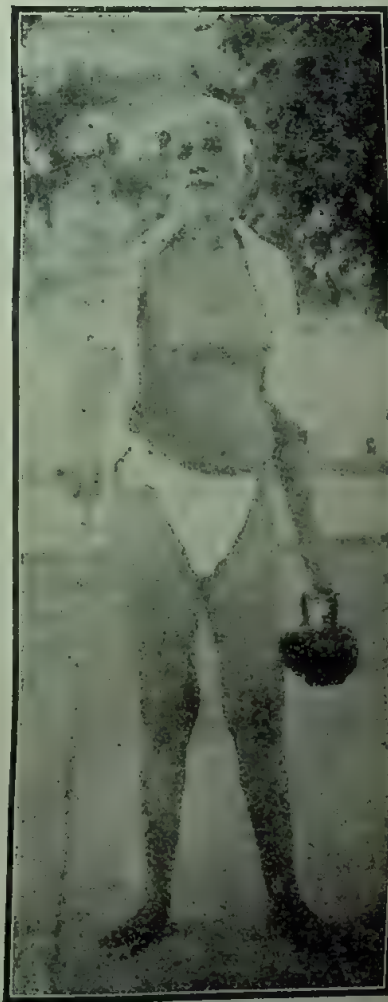
which gave him "a passion for hunting something deeply implanted in the human breast" from his very boyhood. The Rahu in the third house makes a person long-lived and does not do any mischief in the intellectual sphere.

The fourth house is the *Sansar Kshetra*, i.e., the house of worldly concerns and family life. It is vacant. Its lord Saturn is in the sixth house of "Ripu" in the sign Pisces (Meena) of Jupiter. The word "Ripu" literally means enemy but it refers as well to the appetites and passions of man, six in number. Saturn, the celestial school-master, is a great killer of passions and we, therefore, do not find any trace of carnal desire in the sage of Arunachala. Like a Buddha, he had put away anger too and had renounced pride and vanity. The sixth house is virtually a psychic house, though this fact is often overlooked. Jupiter, the lord of the third and sixth houses, is in the fifth, the house of intellect and deep devotion. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa had also Jupiter in the 5th house of his horoscope. This planet, who is said to be the preceptor of gods, gifted both of them with *tattwa-jnana* (Knowledge of truth and reality). Both of these august personages had erased their Ego. In the horoscope of Sri Ramana, there has further been an exchange of the respective houses of the two philosophical planets, Jupiter and Saturn, with the result that we find in him an ascetic and a philosopher of a very high order. Be it noted that Jupiter has gained special strength on account of being in his own Navamsa Meena (Pisces).

The seventh house is the house of marriage partner. Neptune and Mars (the latter in his own sign) are situated there. In the two charts published in *The Mountain Path* the positions of Neptune and Uranus have not been given. The followers of the Eastern method generally ignore these two planets but in many cases they are found to be indispensable for correct predictions. Neptune in the seventh house is always inimical to a married life. If one does marry with such a position of Mars and Neptune, the marital life is bound to be full of unpleasantness. Mars and Neptune have, however, kept him unmarried, not out of their inherent goodness but in view of the influence exerted by the other planets. The mutual square positions of Venus and Jupiter (though not within the recognised degrees of aspects) have contributed to his life of celibacy. The said two benefic planets stand in similar positions (fourth and tenth from each other) in the horoscopes of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and

Swami Vivekananda. It is well-known that both of them lived a life of celibacy.

In judging the health of the subject of a nativity, one has to consider inter alia whether there is any affliction to the first, sixth and eighth houses. The seventh house has no direct connection with health but malefic planets setting (i.e., in the seventh house) affect, by opposition, the health, sometimes to an extreme degree. The reason for this is that the bodies on or near the



cusps of a house seem more often to affect the opposed house than the one in which they are. The opposition of Mars and Neptune to the first house (of health) seems to be responsible for that dreadful disease cancer from which Maharshi suffered during the last days of his life. Whenever there is an obscure and incurable disease, one must look for Neptune or Uranus at

the bottom of it. It was Neptune who seems to have caused the ailment, though he was aided by Mars and also by Saturn—the latter being posited in the sixth house, the notorious house of illness. In this particular matter, this “fell serjeant” Saturn acted as fomenter of the trouble and not as the killer of disease in view of his inherently mischievous nature to inflict death on mortal beings. It is to be borne in mind that Mars, the other helper of Neptune, is the lord of the second and seventh houses both of which are considered as *maraka* (death-inflicting) by the noted astrologer Parasara. To crown all, the eighth house, the house of death and longevity, besides being aspected by Saturn, is hemmed in between Mars and Ketu, an incendiary planet. Mars is proceeding towards Taurus, the sign of the eighth house and Ketu, moving in a backward direction, is also proceeding towards the same sign Taurus. The result is that the house of death is being cut, as it were, with a pair of scissors. Hence the poignancy of the disease leading to Maharshi's demise.

I now come to the ninth house, the house of religion, intuition, fortune, and all auspicious things. There are two planets in this house — Ketu and Moon. More often than not, Ketu mars worldly prosperity if he occupies the house of fortune. But in a horoscope of a superior type, this very planet prepares the ground for mental elevation and if he receives the beneficial aspect of Jupiter as he does in this case, he is capable of doing tremendous good in the spiritual sphere. “*Ketu Kaivalyam*” says Maharshi Jaimini. This

means that Ketu is the giver of emancipation of the soul from bondage. Ketu is conjoined with Moon, the planet of mind and personality. The exceptional strength of a benefic Moon gave Sri Ramana a magnetic personality. The Moon in his horoscope is in the asterism Punarvasu of Jupiter and is further aspected by the same planet. The Moon is also in Vargottam Navamsa as pointed out before and happens to be the Atmakaraka planet of Sri Ramana. According to the view of Jaimini, the planet which is most advanced in degrees and minutes in a particular sign is the Atmakaraka. The Moon is in the last Navamsa of Gemini and as such, the number of degrees passed over by this planet is highest. Jaimini is quite explicit that the Atmakaraka is not only the causer of bondage and liberation according to its weakness and strength but is always the predominating planet in the horoscope. He further opines that if Ketu be in the twelfth house from the Navamsa of the Atmakaraka and is conjoined with or aspected by a benefic planet, he leads to the salvation of the individual. If we look to the Navamsa chart published in the magazine, we find Ketu in the twelfth house from the Moon. In the Rasi chart, Ketu is joined with the benefic Moon (being nearly a Full Moon) and both of them are aspected by the benefic planet Jupiter and also by the Vedantist Solar king. Like the light of a full moon, Maharshi's influence was always soothing. A more powerful Atmakaraka could not be imagined. Such an Atmakaraka planet could not but bring into the world a soul that was bound to be liberated from bondage.

Astrological Note

By V. T. SESHADRI

Maharshi Ramana's Jupiter is in his sixth bhava, which indicates that orthodoxy will not be strictly observed. Not only that, but he is in his dignity and therefore the ruler of the sixth, showing the splendour and success with which orthodox rules were modified. And in fact we see that Bhagavan did not take sannyas or observe the letter of the sastric law, although he embodied the spirit of it.

Mars is in the 8th bhava and controls the 1st,

5th and 9th. For a single planet to control these three is a rare thing. Kuja is Lord Subramanyam, the Commander-in-Chief of the Gods, the Devasenapathi, so no wonder that some of Bhagavan's disciples worshipped him as an Avatar of Lord Subramanyam. It is said in the scriptures that Subramanyam emerged from Agni, Fire; similarly Sri Bhagavan is a fire for the purification of his followers.

INTRODUCING...

One of the very early devotees who is still with us at the Ashram is Sri Kunju Swami. He came as early as 1919, at the age of 18, when Bhagavan was still living at Skandashram. Born at Kodumbur near Palghat in Kerala, he came of a family that were not vegetarians, but such was his aversion for meat-eating that his whole family became vegetarian under his influence. An astrologer foretold that he would follow a spiritual course of life. In youth he was already strongly drawn to japa and worship, and his parents, far from objecting, introduced him to a sannyasin from the Tamil land. This guru gave him a "little" (kunju) Release (Kaivalya), a text on Advaita Vedanta. He also taught him breath control and other yogic practices, but the youth, not satisfied with this, asked him if there was not any Great One who had actual experience of Advaita. The sannyasin showed him a photo of Sri Bhagavan and said that he lived at Arunachala. Kunju Swami determined to seek him out.

He reached the neighbouring station of Katpadi with only Rs. 5 in hand. This would have been enough for a ticket to Tiruvannamalai, but none were being issued, as there was plague there. He managed to reach Tiruvannamalai but found it deserted. He spent the night in one of the mantapams on the route round the Hill. In the morning he climbed the hill to the hut where the Mudaliar Patti and her husband lived and used to cook food for Bhagavan; and they showed him the path to Skandashram. He did not know how to greet the Sage, but seeing three others prostrating before him, he did too. It so happened that one of them, who came from Kerala, knew Kunju Swami and introduced him as a good youth and a spiritual aspirant. Bhagavan said nothing but nodded, as if in approval.

Kunju Swami sat for a long while in Bhagavan's presence. Bhagavan's mother and younger brother, Niranjanananda Swami, were also there, but Niranjanananda Swami was not yet the Sarvadhikari. Perumal Swami was then running the Ashram.

When the others had dispersed, Kunju Swami saw Bhagavan cooking something over a small charcoal stove. He imagined it must be some magic brew which would give him Moksha if he

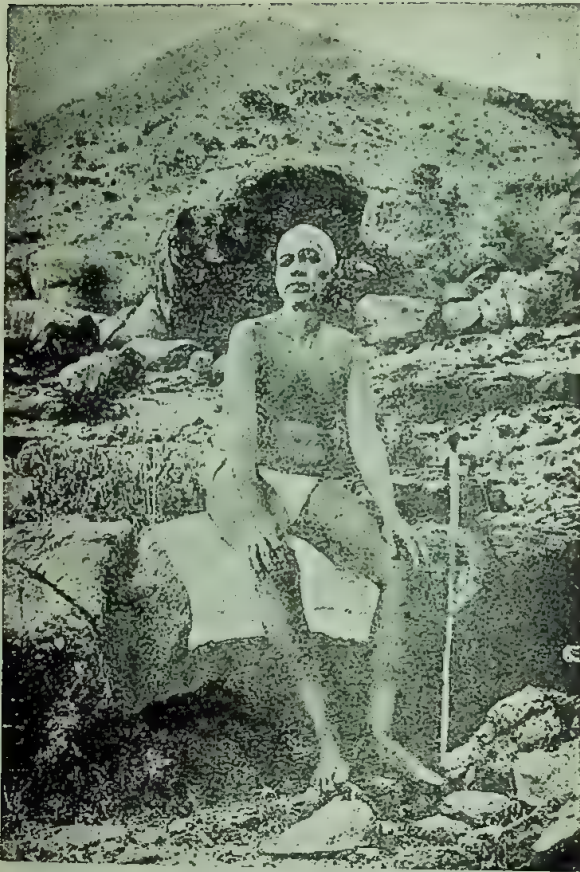


Sri Kunju Swami

could partake of it. Before long, however, Bhagavan went out and brought back four pups to which he gave it. Unable to hold them all at once, he said to Kunju: "Hold them and let them go one by one." These were the first words Bhagavan ever spoke to Kunju, who accordingly took them as upadesa. In the evening, seeing Bhagavan clean up the place after the pups, he offered to do the work and was allowed to.

Kunju Swami approached Bhagavan when alone and asked him for upadesa. Bhagavan's reply was that everything is upadesa and everything is grace. Kunju Swami told Bhagavan that he was doing japa of panchakshara and asked for further guidance. Bhagavan told him to continue the japa as a form of dhyana. He did so for a few days and felt an extraordinary peace of mind. This led him to suppose that he could continue the dhyana as well in his native place, so he returned home. However, the peace of mind evaporated, so he came back and decided this time to remain permanently with Bhagavan.

In those days it was necessary to have permission from Perumal Swami to stay in the Ashram, and he gave Kunju Swami permission for one week only. By Bhagavan's Grace, however, Perumal Swami had to go away unexpectedly and entrusted Kunju Swami with the task, which he himself usually performed, of massag-



ing Bhagavan's feet in the evening with oil and warm water. Making this task his own, Kunju Swami thus became a permanent resident.

When Bhagavan's mother was on her death-

bed, Kunju Swami and Niranjanananda Swami were in constant attendance on her. Since Niranjanananda Swami had other work to do, the duty fell more on Kunju Swami. During her last days, Bhagavan did not come to her but only made enquiries about her health. On her last day, however, he sat with her the whole time, as has been related in the lives of him that have been written.

The mother's body was buried at the foot of the hill, where the Ashram now stands. So that the pujas could be performed there, the residents of Skandashram now split into two groups: the larger group staying with Bhagavan at Skandashram and the smaller remaining near the mother's samadhi. One morning Kunju Swami was cleaning the vessels in a small stream near the mother's samadhi when he heard a voice behind him: "I am a pilgrim, where can I obtain food?" He turned round to see who it was, and who should he see but Bhagavan himself! Kunju Swami and others requested Bhagavan to remain there, and so it came about.

On the famous occasion when thieves broke into the Ashram, Kunju Swami was one of those in the hall with Bhagavan. Unable to put up with the rudeness and violence of the thieves and Bhagavan's extraordinary patience, he ran into town to get help and inform the police.

Many other anecdotes and stories about Bhagavan can be gathered from this old devotee.

I ask you to observe where the 'I' arises in your body, but it is not really quite correct to say that the 'I' arises from and merges in the chest at the right side. The Heart is another name for the Reality and this is neither inside nor outside the body. There can be no in or out for it, since it alone is. I do not mean by 'heart' any physiological organ or any plexus or nerves or anything like that; but so long as a man identifies himself with the body or thinks he is in the body, he is advised to see where in the body the 'I' thought arises and merges again. It must be the heart at the right side of the chest since every man of whatever race and religion and in whatever language he may be speaking, points to the right side of the chest to indicate himself when he says 'I'. This is so all over the world, so that must be the place. And by keenly watching the emergence of the 'I' thought on waking and its subsidence on going to sleep, one can see that it is in the heart on the right side.

When a room is dark you need a lamp to light it, but when the sun rises there is no need for a lamp; objects are seen without one. And to see the sun itself no lamp is needed because it is self-luminous. Similarly with the mind. The reflected light of the mind is necessary to perceive objects, but to see the heart it is enough for the mind to be turned towards it. Then the mind loses itself and the Heart shines forth.

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI



Letters TO THE EDITOR

I have seldom seen so many good articles sandwiched between a magazine's covers. I am particularly impressed with the wide range of your articles which reach from Hinduism, through a somewhat natural extension into Hinduism's child Buddhism, and right on to Christianity. The general tone is excellent and I enjoyed reading most of the contributions. It cheers me to see a publication with such a wide and tolerant attitude and such a high grade of writer contributing.

REV. JACK AUSTIN,
Editor of 'Western Buddhist',
Banstead, Surrey.

May I congratulate you and your co-workers on the wonderful January Number of *The Mountain Path*. It is the best journal of all those which I receive from the various Ashrams and spiritual groups.

I find that the Maharshi has the last word in removing by the quickest and easiest means our Ignorance or Maya. Since my visit to your Ashram last year I can sit for a length of time in pure consciousness filled with boundless love for Ramana. Having formed here ten years ago a branch of the Divine Life Society, I decided, as their General Secretary, to call in our next monthly meeting on all those interested in Ramana and devote the whole meeting to him. His large photo, which I bought years ago, will be garlanded and we will form a Ramana group inside our Divine Life Society to avoid further splitting.

DR. R. T. WERTHER,
Nedlands, West Australia.

Your journal and every book pertaining to the life and teachings of Maharshi have profoundly interested me, as if these teachings were the very thing I had been looking for all my life.

My information about your address and the name of your journal came in a most miraculous way. A stranger with whom I spoke only about five minutes told me immediately to get in touch with you. He took my name and address and promised to write me your address as soon as he returned home, which he did immediately. I had been following Paul Brunton's works and Krishnamurti and was a member of the Theosophical Society but somehow he seemed to know that there was still a search for higher goals. He was most articulate and had a wonderful command of the English language, wasting no moment in his enthusiastic report about Maharshi's teachings. I have the deepest admiration and reverence for the teachings, which have amazed me more than anything I ever read.

Perhaps you may want to know the name of this great salesman of Maharshi and his teachings. He jotted it down for me. It is Marion E. Jasperson of Indianapolis, Indiana. He was only a casual stranger but in those few precious minutes a whole new world of truth was opened up to me through his insistence that I inform myself about Maharshi and subscribe to *The Mountain Path*.

MRS. ELSIE B. HENSHALL,
Elmhurst, Illinois.

Well done, Mr. Jasperson!

EDITOR.

It is now a year since I came to Ramana Maharshi, and I often wonder how I managed to live through the preceding 37 years.

This autumn I held an exhibition of my paintings, and Ramana Maharshi helped in many practical and spiritual ways to get me through the arduous months of preparation.

MARIAN HUBBARD,
Colchester, Essex.

Kindly give us all help, advice and information pertaining to tantric scriptures, manuscripts, articles, methods and practices, prominent tantric siddhas and pandits, tantric sampradayas and literature, etc. Please join us in our earnest attempt to revive the ancient wisdom.

S. B. SWAROOP,
Institute of Psychic and
Spiritual Research, New Delhi.

Our April 1965 issue was largely devoted to Tantra and we are prepared to devote occasional articles to tantric themes, but on the whole we are dedicated rather to the less technical, less intricate and more simple and universal path of Advaita taught by Bhagavan Sri Ramana.

EDITOR.

We so eagerly look forward to each issue of *The Mountain Path* and, along with other subscribers, enthusiastically devour its inspiring messages. May your success with it continue to grow and expand throughout the globe. Thank you for bringing it to us

JOHN C. BEASLEY,
Editor, *The Circus Compendium*,
Carmel, California.

Your careful planning of the subject matter of each issue is, I think, partly the reason why each single issue achieves such an impact. It is a lesson from a teacher on one aspect of wisdom. Only an editor very certain of his gradually developing theme could lead these issues from point to point until the end result might well be termed a study of spiritual life or a teaching by mail. I cannot think of any other publication so motivated. My thanks to you.

CORNELIA BAGAROTTI,
New York.

Two instances of the Maharshi's Grace have occurred to me, one on the physical plane and the other on the spiritual.

1. In 1961, at an official party, among fun and laughter, a small wire hook like a fish-hook got into my throat and was sliding down farther. At my attempts to cough it up only hastened its descent, so I lost all hope of getting it out. I remembered an article in the *Reader's Digest* about an intricate surgical operation for getting a foreign object out by drilling a hole in the chest after correctly anticipating the position of the object with the aid of a fluoroscope; but realizing that such treatment was not available, I gave myself up for lost. I put my face down on my hands and cried inwardly: "Oh Maharshi! I have no refuge but you." I do not know how but at that very instant the metal hook was on the tip of my tongue.

2. In my quest of God-Realization I was using a mantra, repeating it all the time, so that after a while it was going on of itself, like a dynamo, with its own rhythm, without conscious effort on my part. I was also a lover of the Gita, which I knew by heart; and, alternately with the mantra, its verses were also going on within myself. I had various experiences, often culminating in an "experience without experiencer". Sometimes I had the experience of having come near to a goal but being separated from it by an impassable chasm. At such times I had a vision of the gigantic, luminous figure of the Maharshi striding along and telling me that there was no gulf between me and the Goal. Then I had the experience of the Maharshi, myself and the Path merging into a unitary experience of pure Consciousness.

V. B. IYER,
Bombay.

I am always delighted to receive this excellent publication. I greatly appreciated the latest (October) issue, specially your editorial, Father Thomas Merton's contribution and other remarkable articles. It shows fine promise for the future.

PROF. ANDRIEU,
Lyons, France.

I found the article "Al-Khizr" by Abdullah Qutbuddin in October 1965 most interesting. For some reason I have been interested in the story of Moses and Melchisedec especially. So little has been written about him. It has been said that Melchisedec was a mysterious solitary figure in the dim past — "Without father, without mother.

without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life." Is it not as though he were saying "I am the Self"? I would like to learn more about him.

ELEANOR PAULINE NOYE,
Hollywood.

The Self or an initiatic body representing the Self. Unfortunately little more is known about him.

EDITOR.

I have recently started to try to practise Self-enquiry and have also become a vegetarian. Can you please tell me whether the Maharshi considered eggs to be sattvic food?

I read your journal avidly and am especially interested in stories about Bhagavan by those that knew him, and news of devotees, as I feel when reading them an intimacy with members of Bhagavan's family and encouragement on the path.

STEPHEN BROIDE,
Wembly.

In that case you will be enjoying the January issue, which is entirely about Bhagavan.

As to vegetarianism, one does imbibe the subtle qualities of the food one eats and pure or sattvic food is more conducive to the quest. There was an article on this subject in our issue of April 1964. Eggs are not sattvic and are not used at the Ashram and were not in Bhagavan's lifetime. There is no great harm in eating them occasionally or in cakes and so on.

EDITOR.

The new January *Mountain Path* came yesterday. What a sumptuous number. And how well the colour work has been done! It will last me the next three months, till April comes. The *Mountain Path* has more than justified its existence in two short years, even if no other number ever appeared. Thank you. I keep two of your poems ("Others" and "Be Still") always at hand

EBBANA G. BLANCHARD.

(To the Managing Editor) Congratulations on the January 1966 issue of *The Mountain Path*! It is positively superb, a treasure-house full of excellent articles, and the numerous photographs of Bhagavan bring joy to the heart. I know you

must have put in many months of hard work to create this amazing issue. You and Mr. Osborne are doing a fine work with this publication, and what is so marvellous is that it seems to get better and better with each successive issue.

MRS. STAFFORD,
Paris.

I am reading the special Jayanti Number of *The Mountain Path* page by page and line by line with the care and attention that it deserves. Bhagavan's Grace is abounding on every page. It makes very exhilarating reading.

PROF. M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER,
Kulittalai.

Let me congratulate you on the excellent Jayanti Number that you have brought out. Everything is superb! One would love to treasure it in one's heart. I was deeply impressed by the editorial; it was so practical and penetrating.

PROF. KULKARNI,
Kolhapur.

I have just read in the January *Mountain Path* the magnificent editorial "Ramana Sat-Guru" which led me deep within, very close to the ground of Being. Bhagavan's Grace is indeed great! In the same issue there is an article by a Frenchman, Henri Hartung, "Meditation and Action", in which he says: "Just as members of a family or citizens of a nation draw together in face of a threat or a misfortune, so should those who in our times are still guided by spiritual motives draw together," and *The Mountain Path* is indeed a powerful magnet.

MARY KANNY,
Bombay.

The Editorial 'Ramana Sat-Guru' is splendid. After reading it my doubts connected with Self-Enquiry vanished. *The Mountain Path* is a valuable asset, especially to those unfortunates like myself who did not have the privilege of seeing Sri Bhagavan during his body's lifetime. *The Mountain Path* speaks with Sri Bhagavan's voice which echoes silently in the reader's heart.

H. A. SHANKARANARAYANA,
Nullacathu,
Coimbatore Dist.

In your January 1966 editorial it is stated on page 2, column two, that "Sri Lahiri Mahasaya, who died in 1895, so simplified Kriya Yoga as to make it accessible to householders also and even to non-Hindus." I have been wanting to know for quite some time what exactly is Kriya Yoga and I shall be grateful if you will please tell me where I can find the details of this yoga as simplified by Sri Lahiri Mahasaya.

C. P. DOCTOR,
Bombay.

The best account of Kriya Yoga can be obtained from the book "Yogiraj Shri Shri Lahiri Mahasaya" reviewed in our issue of October 1965. This system was also developed for the West by Yogi Mahasaya's spiritual grandson Swami Yogananda in his "Self-Realization Fellowship". You could contact one of Swami Mahasaya's followers in Bengal or some branch of the "Self-Realization Fellowship".

EDITOR.

We are highly gratified to see Srimat Swami Madhavanandaji's obituary in the January 1966 Number of *The Mountain Path*. That bespeaks your liberal-mindedness and sense of appreciation of greatness wherever it may be.

It appears that you are not aware of the fact that the saintly Swamiji visited Sri Ramana in 1940, when he was the General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. I wonder if there is any record of this with any one connected with Sri Ramanasramam? Even otherwise I feel that mention of his meeting the great Ramana should

have found a place in the said obituary, for the Swamiji himself told me that he had gone to Ramanasramam in 1940. I am sorry I do not know in what month. Will you please put a note to this effect in the next issue of *The Mountain Path*. Maybe some old disciple or devotee of the Asramam jotted down a few particulars of their contact and your note might bring them out for the benefit of all spiritual aspirants.

SWAMI EKATMANANDA,
Assistant Secretary,
Ramakrishna Mission,
Sevashrama, Vrindaban,
Mathura, U.P.

I am grateful for this information. I shall also be grateful if any one who witnessed the meeting or has a record of it will send me further information about it.

EDITOR.

I was much moved by the article entitled "The Ever-Present" by the late Duncan Greenlees in the January *Mountain Path*. The millions who believe in the Maharshi will echo his words when he says: "His Light shines with the everlasting clarity of God's own Light."

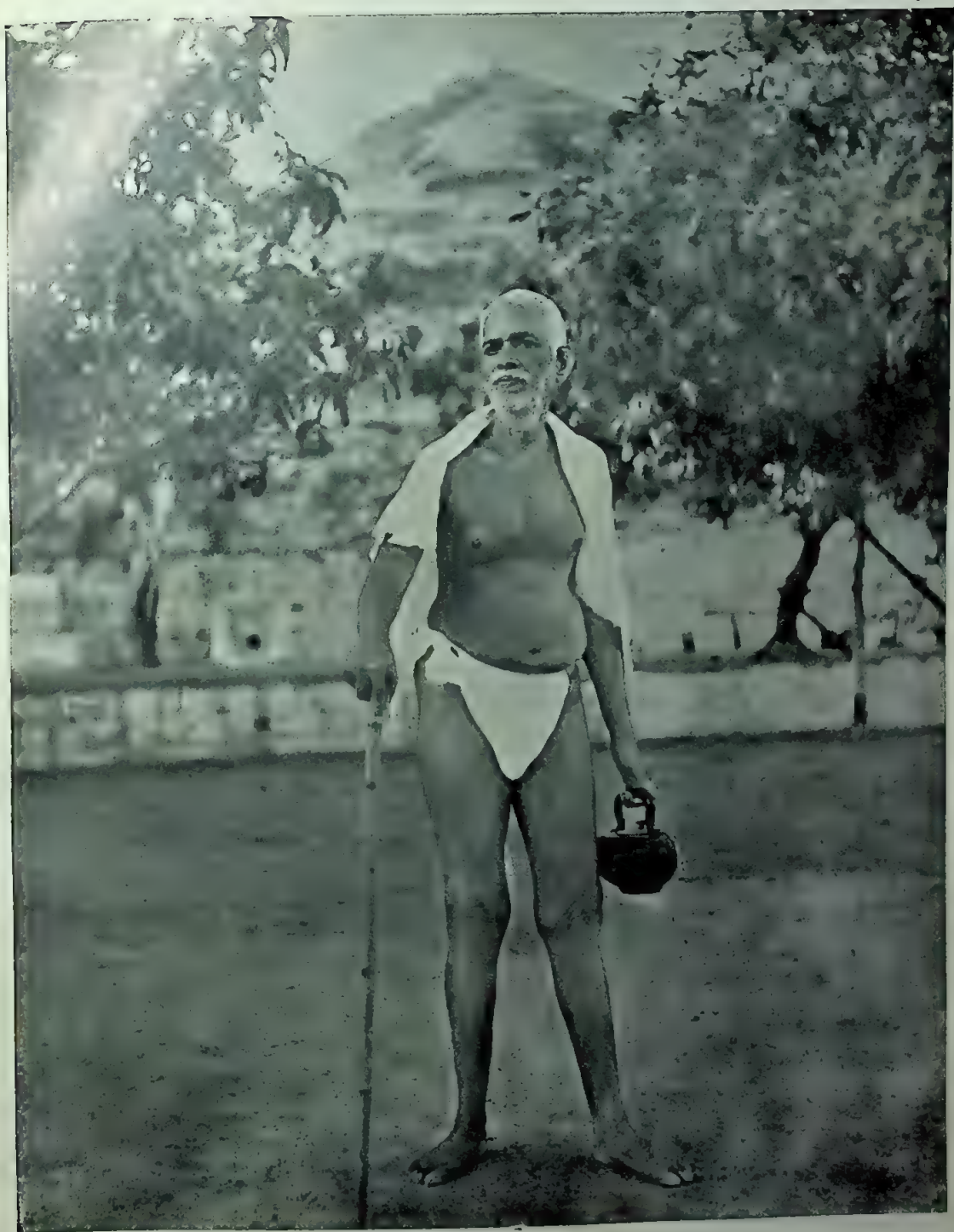
The Spirit of God which, in human form, occupied the physical body of Sri Ramana broods in bountiful love over his Ashram, radiating solace and inspiration to all his devotees. Though I have never seen him, I have felt the impact of his message and the moving spirit of his Presence.

B. KRISHNAMMA,
Secunderabad.

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William Gillespie invites letters from other *Mountain Path* readers to:

41 Viewfield Road
Old Monkland
Coatbridge
Lanarkshire
Scotland
U.K.





THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

Editor: ARTHUR OSBORNE

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REINCARNATION

(EDITORIAL)

It is possible to discuss rebirth only from the point of view of ignorance, because from the point of view of knowledge there is no one to be reborn. Therefore Bhagavan would generally brush the question aside when asked about it. He would make some such reply as: "First find out whether you are born now before asking whether you will be reborn." Or: "Why worry what you will be after death before you know what you are now?"¹

The one thing that a man is absolutely certain about is his own existence. He may come to believe that the world outside him is real or unreal, that he is sitting at a solid table, as his senses tell him, or at a cluster of whirling electrons, as the nuclear scientists tell him, that there is or is not a God, that other people really exist or that they are imagined by him, like the equally real-seeming people he saw in last night's dream; but what he knows from personal, first-hand experience is his own existence.

However, from this certainty he makes a wholly unwarranted deduction: that he is a limited individual being, identical with or located in a particular psycho-somatic instru-

ment. Therefore he starts to worry what will happen to this hypothetical individual when, at death, the psycho-somatic instrument dissolves. Will it continue to exist without a body? Or will it get an ethereal in place of a physical body? Or will it take form as a new complex in a new physical body? It is no use asking the Jnani, the 'Enlightened', since he knows that these are unreal questions inasmuch as the hypothetical individual about whom they are asked never really existed.

This unreality of the hypothetical individual is the basic doctrine of anatta, no-ego, which forms the very starting point of Buddhism. Its final realization is the culmination of all religion. A religion like Christianity, which does not say outright that the ego does not exist and never has, comes round to the same point by insisting that it must be sacrificed. He who gives up his life (the hypothetical ego) for Christ's sake shall find it (the true, universal life of

¹ See the section on reincarnation in Ch. 1 of 'The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own Words', Rider & Co., London, and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

the Spirit); whereas he who clings to it shall lose it.

But to give it up is the hardest thing to do, even though one may be convinced theoretically of its unreality. A man clings so tenaciously to the false hypothesis of individual being that the religions have to lead him by all manner of devious ways to weaken it, attack it, cut away its roots of desire, curb its exuberant growth of indulgence. Ways of indulging it are called vices and banned; ways of curbing it are called virtues and extolled. Indeed, the one thing on which all religions agree is the need to discipline or deny it; and it may be that the common feature in all who renounce religion is its indulgence or, to use the fashionable term of to-day, its 'expression'.

This preoccupation with the hypothetical individual has even invaded religion, taking the form of wondering what will happen to it after death. Indeed, for many people religion has come to mean mainly beliefs and opinions as to what happens after death. Really this is an insignificant part of religion, as may be seen from the fact that two of the world's great religions, Judaism and the original Taoism, said nothing at all about it. The modern exaggeration of its importance is a symptom of dangerous spiritual passivity, since by it religion comes to mean 'what will happen to me' instead of 'what I have to achieve'. As one of our contributors aptly remarked: "Nothing happens that is not earned. And what is earned can be earned as well before death as after."²

The act of dying will not of itself destroy the ego-illusion. It is not the body that is the obstacle to Nirvana or Realization, whichever one may call it, but only the I-am-the-body idea. That is why Bhagavan could affirm that there is no difference between realization in the body and realization after the death of the body. If the ego-illusion remains till the end of life, death will not destroy it; on the other hand, if it is already liquidated death will not revive it.

Since it is only the hypothetical individual or illusory ego that can undergo rein-

carnation, the question exists, as I have already said, only from the 'point of view of ignorance'. That does not, however, imply that it is completely invalid, inasmuch as posthumous states of being, although no more real than this life, are also no less real. It is best to wake up from the whole series of dreams, but for those who are unable to do so it is possible to describe their sequence. Nor is doing this a mere concession to curiosity. It has a positive value within its limited range of reality, since the dream-sequence, as long as it lasts, is shaped by the law of cause and effect, that is of karma, and it is salutary for people to understand that what they do in this life shapes what they will be and undergo later.

It is generally agreed in the various religions that those who have failed to awaken to Reality pass on from this life to a subtle state in which they reap the harvest of good or ill that they have sown. The impressions preserved in what the psychologists would call 'the subconscious' arise to form the environment and substance of a new world, just as they may during a dream. This is what is called heaven and hell.

Hindu teachers add, however, that this is not the end. How can it be? How could an individual state of reaping the harvest of a phenomenal life be frozen into perpetuity? After having thus enjoyed or suffered what has been accumulated, the person is born again into a new life starting at the level to which he had risen or fallen in his previous one; and in this new life again a harvest will be sown and will later have to be reaped.

The question of time, of how long the subtle state between a death and a new birth lasts, does not necessarily arise, since time is only a condition of this physical life. Even during this life it is possible during ecstasy or samadhi to experience timelessness. Moreover, dreams can skip about regardless of time. A dream may show the conditions of life of last week or of next week and another of ten years ago or twenty. There is

² 'Paradise and Nirvana' by A. Qutbuddin in the issue of July 1965.

no necessary time sequence between them. Similarly the duration of a subtle state between a death and a birth would be quite independent of the physical time-scale. And on its termination the next birth, like a person's next dream in this life, might take place at any point in the time-scale. There may be cases where, owing to some contingency, rebirth will closely follow death by worldly time, but it may be possible for a man's next birth to be situated at any time, earlier or later, just as his next dream can be concerned with any period of his life. A man who dies in England to-day may be reborn in Rome at the time of Caesar. But what is definite is that he will be born in the conditions which his living has made appropriate for him. That is to say that it is definite so long as the dream sequence continues and the law of karma applies.

It is generally said that there is no more rebirth for him who has awakened out of the dream of individual being into the Reality of universal Being; but it is never satisfactory to believe something just because it is generally said. That leads to arguments about doctrine. It is better to understand why it is said.

In the vast tapestry of manifestation the entire universe issues forth into form. Alternately it is re-absorbed into formlessness. Each individual life can be likened to a thread in the tapestry. So, if a person could see the whole chain of his incarnations, some of which, from the point where he stands, would appear to be causally past and others causally future, it would be as though one thread in the tapestry was lit up for him and he would say: "Look! here it comes up again, and here and here and here!" Once it might be brightly coloured and once murky, to one pattern central and to another peripheral, and yet weaving its own pattern of successive appearances as it ran

from one general pattern to another according to a scheme of development.

Indeed, there is a twofold pattern of manifestation. The pure being which in essence you are is manifested horizontally and vertically through space and time: horizontally it takes form as all the other beings of your present world, vertically as all the past and future incarnations of your present person. You stand at the intersection of the two patterns.

But when a man has realized his identity with the Being which is manifested in this entire panorama and which re-absorbs it, when, even in this lifetime, he has ceased to consider the body he wears 'his' or to suffer its destiny, it is similarly impossible for him to consider any other body or lifetime 'his' in any other generation or world-appearance. I say 'other' rather than 'future', for the word 'future' would re-introduce the idea of temporal succession and causation, which he has transcended. So far as he can be said to be embodied it is by the entire universe, since he is identical with the One Self which this shows forth.

He may look at other appearances of the thread in the world tapestry which his body is and say 'I'; he may say that it has been or will be or has performed some function or will do so, but all this is from the point of view of the onlookers, and if he also says that he has no incarnation, present or future, or that the whole world is his incarnation there is no contradiction. What has to be remembered is that a man does not become free from reincarnation at the moment of Realization but realizes that he was never bound by it; it is not as though one thread of the tapestry was cut and was therefore absent from 'future' patterns, but as though the entire tapestry was lit up instead of just one thread.

"Sleep is intermediate between two waking states, and in the same way death is intermediate between two births."

—SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.

BHAGAVAN ON REINCARNATION

Culled from 'Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi' and 'The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own Words'.

Just as rivers lose their individuality when they discharge their waters into the ocean, and yet the waters evaporate and return as rain on the hills and back again through the rivers to the ocean, so also individuals lose their individuality when they go to sleep but return again according to their previous innate tendencies. Similarly in death also being is not lost.

* * *

See how a tree grows again when its branches are cut off. So long as the life source is not destroyed it will grow. Similarly, latent potentialities withdraw into the heart at death but do not perish. That is how beings are reborn.

In truth, however, there is neither seed nor tree ; there is only Being.

* * *

Question : How long is the interval between death and rebirth ?

Bhagavan : It may be long or short, but a Realized Man undergoes no such change : he merges into the Infinite Being, as is said in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. Some say that those who, after death, take the path of light are not reborn, whereas those who take the path of darkness are reborn after they have reaped their karma in their subtle bodies.

If a man's merits and demerits are equal he is reborn immediately on earth ; if the merits outweigh the demerits his subtle body goes first to heaven, while if the demerits outweigh the merits he goes first to hell. But in either case he is later reborn on earth. All this is described in the scriptures, but in fact there is neither birth nor death : one simply remains what one really is. That is the only truth.

* * *



Question : Is the Buddhist view that there is no continuous entity answering to the idea of the individual soul right or not ? Is this consistent with the Hindu doctrine of a reincarnating ego ? Is the soul a continuous entity which reincarnates again and again according to the Hindu doctrine or a mere conglomeration of mental tendencies according to the Buddhists ?

Bhagavan : The real Self is continuous and unaffected. The reincarnating ego belongs to a lower plane, that of thought. It is transcended by Self-realization. Reincarnations are due to a spurious offshoot of Being and are therefore denied by the Buddhists. The

human state is due to a mingling of the sentient with the insentient.

The birth of the I-thought is a person's birth and its death is his death. After the I-thought has arisen the false identification with the body arises. But if you cease to identify yourself with the body and realize the true Self this confusion will vanish.

* * *

Devotee : Even if I cannot realize in my lifetime, let me at least not forget on my deathbed. Let me have a glimpse of Reality at the moment of death so that it may stand me in good stead in the future.

Bhagavan : It is said in the Bhagavad Gita, Ch. VIII, that whatever is a person's last thought at death determines his next birth. But it is necessary to experience Reality now in this lifetime in order to experience it at death. Consider whether the present moment is any different from the last one of death and try to be in the desired state now.

* * *

Question : Is the Hindu doctrine of reincarnation right ?

Bhagavan : No definite answer is possible. Even the present incarnation is denied, for instance in the Bhagavad Gita.

* * *

Question : Isn't our personality beginningless ?

Bhagavan : Find out first whether it exists at all and after you have solved that problem ask the question. Nammalwar says : "In ignorance I took the ego to be the Self, but with right knowledge the ego is not and only You remain as the Self." Both the non-dualists and the dualists agree on the necessity for Self-realization. Attain that first and then raise other questions. Non-dualism or dualism cannot be decided on theoretical grounds alone. If the Self is realized the question will not arise.

* * *

Whatever is born must die ; whatever is acquired must be lost ; but were you born ? You are eternally existent. The Self can never be lost.

THE DREAM-SELF

By A. RAO

You dreamed you were a postman, say, last night :
And do you ask to-day if he still is —
The postman-you who never really was
But only seemed to be ?
It is so plain to see.

What was he then ? Had he a self ? a soul ?
Or was he just a mask you took ? And was
The dream with all the dream-folk he found real
A world no further true
Than in the mind of you ?

Why cling in vain to such a phantom self
Within the brief horizons of a dream ?
An intuition of eternity ?
Right — but whose ? The dream's ?
What is, or what just seems ?

LINES FROM 'A TESTAMENT'

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

Section Two

Some there are who hold
Death is the end : nothing again to be,
Nothing to know ; for all your tale is told,
And that poor thing that rots in the dark ground
Is all that is of the once manifold
Lover of fair faces and sweet sound
Who trod the earth and thought that he was you.
There others are who see life girdled round
With brighter spheres of forms forever new,
As much more vivid than the earth-forms here
As peacock's throat than sparrow's dingy hue.
There (a spaceless 'there', as dreams appear)
Forces bred up on earth but out of sight—
Courage that goes straight on in spite of fear,
Or twisted guilt submerged from the clear light
Of conscious mind—rise and surround a man
In outer forms of terror or delight ;
His own brood, hidden for the earth-life span,
Now torturing his disembodied soul
Eternally if evil ; but for who ran
Life's race on earth to the appointed goal
Peace everlasting, bliss past words to tell.
Others declare that this is not the whole.
One season's harvest can't forever sell,
Or one life's balance, whether good or bad,
Consign eternally to heaven or hell.
Man's inner life materialises, clad
In incorporeal forms, they too admit ;
But thus the reckoning, whether glad or sad,
Is closed, books balanced : there's an end of it.
Thence he returns once more to life on earth,
At that same level he himself made fit
By use or misuse of his former birth :
Free once again to rise, or free to sink,
The architect again of his own worth.
Again the bell tolls ; again the brink
Of death is crossed to living more intense,
More heaven or hell, than earth-bound mind can think.
Thus a man's life brings on its recompense,
Rising before him. Inexorably the Wheel
Swings round from growth to harvest, from the dense
Earth-life that builds to regions that reveal .
Can man increase in stature, till he feel
A brimming joy in what before was strife
And no more yearn to earth-ways, no more cling .
To memory or desire, as with a knife
What there he built. And thus from life to life

Cut off all craving. Nothing again can bring
Rebirth or death, or grief to such a one,
Free as the stars, free as the winds that sing
His glory on the hill-tops, beyond the sun,
In his own radiance gloriously bedight,
Absorbed unending in the Unbegun,
Beyond the parting of the day and night,
Changeless, he sees the changing world aright.

Section Three

Not equally at fault these views, The first
Alone is wholly wrong, The next contains
All that man needs of truth to be well versed
In his own interest and from petty gains
Followed by great loss to turn and seek
His heritage of bliss, purchased by pains
Prepaid but transient, in prospect bleak,
Like Muslim's dower for his unseen bride,
In retrospect nothing of which to speak.
The third view also can as well provide
Incentive and a way—all that men need.
Yet these three views of man, however wide
They move apart, all spring from the same seed
Of error, for they all alike declare
You are that sentient body whence proceed
Cravings like roots, like branches in the air
Thoughts and ideals, hedged by necessity—
Mere fantasy! No such thing is there!
You are pure Consciousness, Eternity,
Wherein birth, death and world are but such stuff
As dreams are made on. No hyperbole!
Just as a night-time dream seems real enough,
So long it lasts, within your mortal mind,
So your life's journey, whether smooth or rough—
Between deep hedgerows fragrantly entwined
With honeysuckle, all the air athrob
With singing of the birds, your steps combined
With those of loved companion, such as rob
Exhaustion of its pain, night of its fears,
Or over arid crags, where not to sob
For weariness were hard when the sun sears
And only thorn-trees cast a stunted shade,
While all ahead the naked shale appears—
All that same dream-stuff out of which is made
Your mortal self. All that is known or seen,
With you in it, a pageant is, displayed
Harmless in you, like pictures on a screen.
Awake! for dawn has set the sky aflame!
Awake from dreaming what has never been
To find the universe entire a game
Forever, new, you evermore the same.

THE HINDU DOCTRINE OF KARMA AND REINCARNATION

By PROF. M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

This is a characteristic Hindu doctrine. All schools of Indian philosophy, with the sole exception of the Charvaka, have admitted it. A remarkable point is that even Buddhism accepts it though it does not believe in a permanent entity which could migrate from one bodily existence to another.¹ The Epics and the Puranas reinforce the doctrine and bring it home to the minds of the generality by means of attractive stories which combine the artful narration of events with unobtrusive moral instruction. That man has to pay for his misdeeds in the shape of sorrow and suffering, that no one who indulges in wrongdoing can hope to escape its evil consequences, that punishment will overtake the sinner, if not here and now at least at some future time, that we are the architects of our own destiny, that we have to thank only ourselves if we find ourselves on a bed of thorns, and that wisdom consists in putting the best face on our troubles — these ideas have been so repeatedly borne in on our minds that they have become a part of our very being. They are handed down from generation to generation as a part of our national heritage. It never occurs even to unlettered persons to shift the blame for their tribulations on to other shoulders. That their lot in life is the outcome of their own deeds in a past birth lies most effortlessly on their lips. The fact that the people of this vast land are, by and large, so law-abiding and peaceful despite their poverty and a thousand other ills is to be attributed not a little to the continuous propagation of this doctrine.

It is a doctrine fully supported by the revealed texts (sruti), reasoning (yukti) and the experience of Seers (anubhava). Several passages in the Upanishads, especially the Chandogya and Brihadaranyaka, bear

on it. "He who entertains desires and prizes them is reborn in a place and environment best suited to their attainment."² "The self is identified with desire. What it desires it resolves upon; what it resolves upon it performs, and what it performs it attains to. Through attachment it attains the result of its performance (in a future birth)."³ "The essence of man is his volition: as he wills in this world, so does he become on departing from here."⁴ "Some souls enter into the womb and become embodied (as human beings), while others become inanimate objects, according to their actions and thoughts."⁵ "As a man behaves and acts, so does he become; by doing good he becomes good and by doing evil he becomes evil."⁶ "Those who have been of good conduct here will quickly attain a good birth — that of a Brahmin or a Kshatriya or a Vaisya; but those who have been of evil conduct will attain an evil birth — that of a dog or a pig or a chandala."⁷

When the soul departs from the body "it is accompanied by its knowledge, work and past experiences."⁸ Impressions are left on it by the actions performed by a man throughout his lifetime. Every action leaves its impress not only on the nervous system but also on the soul. The oftener we perform an action the stronger and more well defined the impress becomes, until in the

¹ However the 'permanent entity' envisaged by Hinduism is only permanent and an entity within the domain of Maya, which is itself impermanent and unreal, so that the difference between the two doctrines turns out to be rather one of expression than fact.—(Ed.)

² *Mundaka*, III, II, 2.

³ *Br. Up.*, IV, IV, 5-6.

⁴ *Ch. Up.*, III, XIV, 1.

⁵ *Kath. Up.*, V, 7.

⁶ *Br. Up.*, IV, IV, 5.

⁷ *Ch. Up.*, V, X, 7.

⁸ *Br. Up.*, IV, IV, 2.

end it becomes a tendency (samskara). Under the influence of these acquired samskaras men feel themselves impelled, as by an outer force, towards certain courses of action. We may even feel helpless against them; and if unfortunately they are of the wrong kind we indulge in wrong-doing almost against our better judgement. Arjuna gives expression to this feeling when he says: "What impels a man to commit sin, O Krishna, in spite of himself, driven as it were by some force?"⁹ And the Lord Himself admits that "all beings follow their nature (prakriti). What can repression do?"¹⁰ It will be remembered that when Ravana's grandfather advised him to retrace his steps and restore Sita to her Lord the latter replied that he would rather break in two than bend before anybody. That was his nature and no one could overcome his nature.¹¹ Evil-doers often take cover under this excuse.

If a man's tendencies are, fortunately, of the right kind they lead to good actions which are beneficial to himself and others. Such people go on doing good without even being conscious of it. It comes as natural to them as breathing. They expect nothing in return. The samskaras which they have inherited from their own past make it easy for them to lead a life of service. Heredity and environment may have something to do with it but the most important factor is one's own samskaras. In spite of noble parentage and helpful surroundings, many sons do not live up to expectations, while the contrary is also true: that a profound philosopher or inspired poet emerges from an unpromising environment. It is also a familiar sight to see one son achieve world fame while others born of the same parents remain obscure. These may look like vagaries but are not really so. Over and above heredity and environment there is the legacy of the past which the individual carries with him in his transmigratory experience.

To clinch the point we may refer to the phenomenon of precocity. We sometimes come across boy prodigies who take to

some special study such as mathematics or music like fish to water and make rapid progress with little effort. The way they go about it looks more like picking up old threads than learning something new. "By his former habit he is led on in spite of himself," says the Lord.¹² If we can argue from effects to causes,¹³ we are compelled to believe that these exceptional men of genius bring a rich heritage with them when they enter into the conditions of another bodily existence.

What it comes to, then, is that the soul which arises in a new body does so, as the English poet says, "Not in entire forgetfulness, not in utter nakedness" but carrying with it its own accumulated tendencies. These do not actually inhere in the soul for, according to Hindu teaching, this is untouched by good or evil. It is pure Consciousness which stands apart and simply witnesses the vicissitudes through which the individual being (jiva) passes. If the tendencies do not inhere in the soul they must inhere in something else, for without a substrate or vehicle they could not pass from one bodily existence to another. Since the gross physical body is burnt to ashes after death (or is buried and decays) we are driven to the conclusion that there must be some other vehicle. This is said to be the subtle body composed of the finer essence of the five elements. The *Taittiriya Upanishad* speaks of the soul as being encased within five sheaths one within another like the skins of an onion. These are known as 'kosas'. The outermost is known as the sheath of matter (annamaya kosa). This is identified with the physical body (stula sarira). The next three, known as pranamaya, manomaya and vijñanamaya kosas, comprise the subtle body (sukshma or linga sarira). When the soul, due to primeval ignorance, identifies itself with this subtle body it is known as the individual being

⁹ *Gita*, III, 36.

¹⁰ *Gita*, III, 33.

¹¹ *Ramayana*, Yuddhakanda, sloka 11.

¹² *Gita*, VI, 44.

¹³ As from the prosperity which they enjoyed King Dilipa's subjects argued that the policy of their ruler must be essentially sound.

(jiva). It is this jiva which transmigrates from one bodily existence to another, carrying with it all its acquired good and evil tendencies.

On leaving the body, the jiva, without loss of time, enters another kept ready for it and quite suited to the working out of the karma which has come to fruition. "Just as when a king is touring the country the people of the village which he is expected to visit wait for him with various kinds of food and drink and dwelling place, so is a suitable body and fit environment kept ready for the jiva."¹⁴ He enters this immediately after putting off the previous body. "Just as a caterpillar on a stem of grass goes to the end of it and then takes hold of another support and draws itself forward on to it, so does the self throw aside this body, take hold of another support and draw itself to it."¹⁵ Commenting on this passage, Sri Shankara makes the point quite clear. "The impressions called past experiences stretch out like a caterpillar from the body, while retaining their seat in the heart, and build another body in accordance with past actions; and when the new body is ready they let go their grip on the old."¹⁶

In the physical realm no disturbance can take place without corresponding repercussions. This is what we mean by saying that every cause has its effect. Sometimes the effect may occur almost immediately and in other cases in the more or less distant future. That every event has its cause and that nothing can occur without a proper and sufficient cause are converse statements of the same law. Karma and reincarnation are an exact counterpart of the law of causation which holds on the physical plane. No man can do wrong and expect to get away with it. Punishment will surely overtake him sooner or later, if not in this lifetime then in another. Just as corn takes time to ripen for harvest, so wrong actions take their time to recoil on the doer. Reincarnation is therefore the logical complement of the law of karma. The wrong-doer may escape the policeman but cannot escape the life to come. When punishment in the shape of

suffering and sorrow overtakes a man wisdom lies in seeing the hidden hand of justice in it. There is no ground for complaint. We lie in the beds we have made for ourselves. We have therefore to endure our tribulations cheerfully and learn a lesson from them. In the same way also the good deeds we do take time to produce their results and we should not be greedy for quick returns.

If an upright man is not immediately rewarded or a wrong-doer enjoys a gay and prosperous life we need not feel frustrated or lose faith in dharma. The present misfortunes of the former and prosperity of the latter have both to be traced to antecedent causes. They must be attributed to the karma built up in a previous life, while what is done in the present lifetime will bear fruit in a future life. We have to take a long-range view, and faith in the law of causation compels us to posit a past as well as a future for man. Belief in past and future births is therefore a logical necessity.

Countless are the births we have already passed through, although we do not remember them. The physical brain, which is the seat of memory, is destroyed at death, and this accounts for the inability. There are some, however, who are able to recall their past births. The Upanishad mentions the instance of Vamadeva.¹⁷ In the Gita¹⁸ the Lord says that he remembers his past births although ordinary people are not able to. We know in a general way that we have

¹⁴ *Br. Up.*, IV, III, 11-12.

¹⁵ *Br. Up.*, IV, IV, 3.

¹⁶ This does not prevent the intervention of a state of heaven or hell, since such state need not be subject to the physical time-scale. As mentioned elsewhere in this issue, Sri. Ramana Maharshi answered when asked about this: "If a man's merits and demerits are equal he is reborn immediately on earth; if the merits outweigh the demerits his subtle body goes first to heaven, while if the demerits outweigh the merits he goes first to hell. But in either case he is later reborn on earth. All this is described in the scriptures, but in fact there is neither birth nor death; one simply remains what one really is. That is the only truth." — (*Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, p. 573).—Ed.

¹⁷ *Br. Up.*, I, IV, 10.

¹⁸ IV, 5.

gone through previous periods of probation, though not in detail. The differences that we see between men in their intellectual and other attainments cannot be explained otherwise than by the *samskaras* which they derive from their past lives.

How many lives still await us we have no way of knowing. It depends on the amount of karma that has yet to be worked out. However this amount is not a fixed quantity but is constantly being exhausted from one side and added to from the other. Apart from the stock already accumulated (*sanchita karma*), there is that which is now being made (*agami karma*), so that by selfish activity we are creating new burdens for ourselves. In this way, when the karma to be worked off in this lifetime (*prarabha karma*) is exhausted its place is taken by another that has been accumulated, and so it goes on. It looks like a self-perpetuating, never-ending affair. Caught in its vortex, it looks as though we should be going round and round in an unending circle. Hindu writers generally compare the *jiva's* transmigratory career to a limitless ocean, the ocean of *samsara*.

However, it can be both mitigated and brought to an end. The way of mitigating it is by regarding it as opportunities for self-purification and for getting rid of ingrained vices. These are deep-rooted and die hard. Long and continued discipline is necessary to eradicate them. The Lord says in the Gita: "If a yogi strives with diligence he is cleansed of all his sins and, becoming perfect through many births, he reaches the Supreme State."¹⁹ In another context he says: "At the end of many births the man who knows seeks refuge in Me, realising that Vasudeva is all."²⁰ Repeated births are not therefore to be regarded only as a punishment but also as opportunities for spiritual advancement.

The process of return can be accelerated by right knowledge of the Self. Such knowledge can bring the transmigratory career of the *jiva* (that is the ocean of *samsara*) to an end at one stroke. We emerge from the endless circle of *samsara* the moment we realise that the true Self of us has nothing to do with the causal body (*karana sarira*), subtle body (*sukshma sarira*) and physical body (*stula sarira*) that are caught in it. The pure Self has to be disengaged from its adventitious encumbrances. This can be effected at any moment. It lies with us. Only we must put in the required effort.

Thus, strange as it may seem, the Hindu doctrine of karma and reincarnation fills us with hope and resignation at the same time. With regard to the past, what we have done is done and is irrevocable. We must pay the penalty and accept the punishment in a spirit of resignation. But determinism ends here. So far as our future is concerned, it is entirely in our hands. We can make or mar it and there is no compelling reason why we should do the latter. It is a superficial view to suppose that we are the slaves of our past and that there is no getting out of it. The Lord says in the Gita that the *samskaras* come into play only if the *buddhi*, *manas* and *indriyas* (intellect, reason and senses) co-operate with them. If the *indriyas* are allowed free rein they run after objects. The *samskaras* feed on objects through the instrumentality of the intermediate links. *Buddhi*, *manas* and *indriyas* belong to the *jiva*, the lower or individual self. But man has a higher Self, and if he reminds himself of this he can control the lower self. If the sense organs are restrained the *samskaras* will have nothing to feed on and will consequently become ineffective. A man will then be a free agent to shape his future.

¹⁹ VI, 45.

²⁰ VII, 19.

"The grip of the ego can be loosened by not adding new *vasanas* to it." — SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.

DEVAYANA AND PITRIYANA

By BHAGAVAN DAS

To say simply that the Sanatana Dharma or "Eternal Harmony", which Westerners call "Hinduism", teaches reincarnation would be simplifying matters too much. There are various possibilities according to what use a person makes of his life.

In the first place, the Jivan-Mukta, Liberated while living, is obviously not born again. Bhagavan Ramana confirms in "Self-Enquiry" that there is no difference between the Jivan-Mukta, Liberated while living, and the Videha-Mukta, Liberated after death of the body. He also said that after attaining Moksha there is nothing more to attain, nothing beyond. But even without this confirmation it would be obvious that one who has awakened to Reality cannot be plunged back again into illusion by the mere destruction of the psycho-somatic instrument which is part of the illusion; having realized that he is not a phenomenal object, he will not again imagine himself to be such.

Next there is the case of those who, on leaving the body, take the Devayana or Divine Path to Union or Videha-Mukti, never again to return to the suffering and limitation of birth as a phenomenal being. Of them Sri Krishna says: "Having attained to Me the great ones do not return to birth, which is the domain of suffering and impermanence, for they have entered the Supreme State."¹ The same assurance is contained also in the Upanishads: "There a non-human person meets him and conducts him to Brahma. This is the Divine Way, the way leading to Brahma. Those who go by it do not return to the world; indeed they do not return."²

Exalted, though less complete than this, is the state of those who attain at death to the heaven known as Brahmaloaka where they abide in a lofty state of bliss, free from insecurity and becoming, until the end of this cycle of manifestation. This is the

heaven of Brahma, the Creator, who is referred to as "Saguna" or "with qualities" and thereby distinguished from the neuter noun Brahman, which is Nirguna, that is qualityless or "beyond the gunas". Perhaps it would be more correct to say that the masculine Brahma is the manifestation of the neuter Brahman. Just as one school of modern astronomers hold the theory of alternate expansion and contraction of the universe, so Hindu traditional cosmology teaches the alternate manifestation and dissolution of the cosmos, comprising not merely the physical universe but higher and lower states of being also, heavens and hells, with all their gods and men and demons and other celestial, earthly and infernal beings. These alternate phases are known as the Day and Night of Brahma. Brahma, the Presiding Intelligence of the cycle, is re-absorbed at the end of it and manifested forth again at the dawn of the new cycle. "Knowers of Day and Night know that a thousand ages make up the Day of Brahma and a thousand ages his Night. At the dawning of that Day all things stream forth from the Unmanifest, and at the coming on of night they sink back into that same Unmanifest."³

Those who attain to Brahmaloaka are thus established in a state of bliss and set free from rebirth with all its suffering and insecurity throughout the whole duration of this cycle or Day of Brahma. This is the state equivalent to the monotheistic conception of "heaven".

The complete cycle, that is the alternation of Day and Night of Brahma, manifestation and dissolution of the universe, is contained within the Ultimate Unmanifest of Nirguna Brahman: "But beyond this Unmanifest is

¹ *Bhagavad Gita*, VIII, 15.

² *Chandogya Upanishad*, IV, XV, 5.

³ *Bhagavad Gita*, VIII, 17, 18.

another, the Eternal Unmanifest, which perishes not when all things perish. This Supreme State is called the Unmanifest Imperishable. That is My highest abode. For those who attain to it here is no return."⁴

But do those who have lasted out the cycle in Brahmaloka attain to it? Two possibilities are mentioned: that they may be absorbed in Nirguna, the Eternal Unmanifest, with no more need for rebirth, or that they may re-enter the round of births and deaths in a new cycle. Krishna Bikshu quotes Bhagavan as referring to the former possibility in *The Mountain Path*⁵ of July 1965. Also the passage from the Chandogya Upanishad quoted above indicates it. The latter possibility is affirmed in the Bhagavad Gita: "From Brahmaloka downwards, all worlds involve rebirth. ... After repeated births, this same multitude of beings merge helpless again at the approach of Night, and they issue forth at the dawn of Day."⁶

Swami Nikhilananda mentions both possibilities in his Introduction to his translation of the Upanishads⁷ "Though identified with all minds and the entire universe, Brahma is also described as the presiding deity or governor of a special plane, or heaven, known as Brahmaloka, the Plane of Brahma. This is the most exalted realm in the relative universe, and may be compared, in a general way, to the heaven of the dualistic religions. Those fortunate mortals who, while living on earth, worship Saguna Brahma with whole-souled devotion, meditating on their identity with Him, proceed after death to Brahmaloka, where they dwell absorbed in contemplation of Saguna Brahman. There they experience uninterrupted peace and blessedness and take part in the cosmic life of Brahma. They are not affected by any of the shortcomings of the other relative planes, such as disease, pain, thirst or hunger. These inhabitants of Brahmaloka do not come back to earth, but at the end of the cycle become absorbed, together with Brahma, in the attributeless Brahman, and thus attain final Liberation. This is described as "kramamukti" or Liberation attained by stages. There is

another class of devotees who also attain to Brahmaloka after death but come back to earth for a new embodiment after reaping the results of their meritorious actions."⁸

All the possibilities mentioned up to here, it will be seen, are above the normal course of reincarnation. Those who take this normal course are said to follow the Pitriyana or Ancestral Path, not the Devayana or Divine Path, coming to the light of the moon instead of to Brahma, and from there returning again to birth in the world. "Knowers of Brahman, departing hence by fire, by light, by daytime, in the bright fortnight of the moon and the ascending course of the sun, attain to Brahman. Yogis who go forth by smoke, by night, in the dark fortnight and in the declining course of the sun pass hence to the light of the moon and return again. These two paths, the light and the dark, are held to be eternal. By the one a man goes forth not to return again; by the latter he returns."⁹

It will be seen that the Pitriyana is not the path to hell or punishment, except insofar as a return to life in the world is itself considered punishment. It is less blessed than the Devayana, from which there is no return at all, but it is the path of all the vast range of persons who are reborn whether to an auspicious or an inauspicious birth.

Having outlined the journey of such persons to the plane of the moon, the Upanishad says briefly: "Having dwelt there till their karma is exhausted, they return the way they came."¹⁰ This brief, cryptic statement implies that Chandraloka, the plane of the moon, is the state where the harvest of karma created in the preceding earth-life is reaped before the soul returns to rebirth. It will be heaven or hell according to whether the karma accumulated was good or evil. One could say that it will be one's own

⁴ *ibid.*, VIII, 20, 21.

⁵ Page 148.

⁶ *Bhagavad Gita*, VIII, 16 and 19.

⁷ Allen & Unwin.

⁸ Page 48.

⁹ *Bhagavad Gita*, VIII, 24-26.

¹⁰ *Chandogya Upanishad*, V, X, 5.

inner state manifested outwardly. To attempt to compute its duration in terms of earthly time would be idle, since subtle or mental duration, even on this earth, differs from physical duration. What is important is that it is the state where what one has laid up for oneself rises up before one.

However, the harvesting or repayment that takes place there still leaves a person what he was when he died, that is to say a being subject to karma and with the same inclinations he had before. It does not give him Enlightenment, however rapturous the experiences may be, nor, however frightful, does it exorcise his evil inclinations. This shows the terrific importance of life on earth, for neither in heaven nor hell can spiritual progress be made and Release attained, but only during earth-life. He who experiences the heaven or hell he has prepared for himself still remains the same person who prepared it. Therefore, when the time comes for rebirth, there is, as it were, a second reward or punishment. Having been rewarded with the raptures of heaven or punished with the pangs of hell during the intermediary phase of Chandraloka, a person is again rewarded or punished

by being launched forth into life again on the level suitable to what he made of himself in his previous life. As the Upanishad briefly says: "Those whose conduct here has been good will quickly attain some good birth — as a Brahmin or Kshatriya or Vaishya. But those whose conduct has been evil will quickly attain some evil birth — as a dog or a pig or an outcaste."¹¹ Nor is there any one but oneself whom one can blame for this double punishment or thank for this double reward, since it is simple cause and effect. One who has become the sort of person to be attracted to a certain level of experience will be drawn by his own nature to that level. No outside force will intervene to push him to any other level, either higher or lower.

The Devayana is the path of the few heroic conquerors, the Pitriyana that of the many who are reborn. The Upanishad speaks of a possibility even lower than the Pitriyana. A human birth is a great boon; it should not be thrown away in ignorant, sensual and egoistic living. If thus wasted it is not easily to be acquired again.

¹¹ *ibid.*, V, X, 7.

BHAGAVAN'S TEACHING ON AHAM VRITTI

By N. R. RAJAGOPALAIYER

The essence of Sri Bhagavan's teaching, in the practical sense of what an aspirant need know, is earnest and one-pointed enquiry into the source of Aham Vritti. If the mind is turned inward to this enquiry, the vasanās or latent tendencies become extinct and, in the absence of reflection, the reflecting medium; i.e. the mind, also disappears, being absorbed into the Light of the One Reality.

Self-enquiry really means intense inward-turning of the mind. What it finally leads to in its quest of the source of Aham Vritti is the Heart Itself, which is the undifferen-

tiated Light of Pure Consciousness into which the reflected light of the mind is completely absorbed.

The Jnani's lakshya is the Heart, which is the Self, because he is identical with that undifferentiated pure Consciousness referred to in the Upanishads as Prajnana which is actually Brahman, the Absolute. There is no Brahman other than Prajnana.

Aham Vritti can best be described as a current or vibration of awareness of being. It is centred in the heart at the right side but may pervade the whole body. (Editorial Note)

THE QUESTIONS OF NACHIKETAS

By MADGUNI SHAMBHU BHAT

The Kathopanishad, one of the most important of the 108 greater Upanishads, deals with the true nature of man and with what happens to him after death. It is woven around, or rather grows out of the story of Nachiketas.

His father, a Brahmin, performed a sacrifice which involved giving away all his possessions. Nachiketas made a nuisance of himself criticising the poor quality of the cattle given away and then said : "A son too is property so who are you going to give me to ?"

Exasperated, the father replied : "Oh, I'll give you to Yama."

Yama is the God of Death.

Nachiketas, taking his father at his word, went to Yama. Yama was away on his errands when the boy arrived and it was three days before he returned so the boy had to wait three days for him. During these three days he fasted and, when Yama did get back, he offered Nachiketas three boons to atone for this discourtesy. For the first Nachiketas asked that his father's anger might cool down and any anxiety he

felt at his son's absence be appeased. For the second he asked to be instructed in the mysteries of the fire sacrifice. And for the third he asked Yama to teach him what happens after death. Who should know if not Yama ?

Yama first tried to avoid answering this last question, offering the boy instead all manner of prosperity and a long and successful life, but Nachiketas was firm. Finally the answer was given. Yama mentioned two possibilities : Rebirth and Release. "If the buddhi is yoked to a distracted mind it loses discrimination and remains ever impure ; then the incarnate soul fails to attain its goal but enters the round of rebirth. But if the buddhi is yoked to a restrained mind it possesses discrimination and then the incarnate soul attains that state from which there is no rebirth" (I, III, 7).

Later he mentions still a third possibility, this time lower than rebirth. "Some souls enter a womb for rebirth and some enter into stationary objects, according to their works and knowledge" (II, II, 7). It is possible to fall below rebirth as well as to rise above it.

GIVE UP RE-BIRTH

Kingdoms, sons, wives, bodies and pleasures have been lost to you birth after birth in spite of your attachment.

Have done then with prosperity, desire and good works. The mind found no peace in them in the dreary forest of the world.

For how many births have you not done hard and painful work with your body, mind and speech ! Therefore now at least desist.

— Ashtavakra Gita, X, 6-8.

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI AND THE INDIAN PHILOSOPHIC TRADITION

By HIS HIGHNESS SRI JAYA CHAMARAJA WADIYAR BAHADUR,
Maharaja of Mysore.

In the sixth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita an interesting question is raised by Arjuna. It is about a person who, though endowed with faith, becomes diverted from the path of yoga and who consequently fails nothing like a fall for such a person either here or hereafter. He adds further by saying that such a one takes birth in a noble or enlightened family. And there, aided by spiritual impressions acquired by him in



to achieve self-realization. "Does he not perish", asks Arjuna, "like the split-cloud, deprived of both God-realization and worldly joy?" Lord Krishna meets the question squarely¹ and answers that there is

previous births, he finally reaches the supreme spiritual state.

The answer given by Lord Krishna to Arjuna is the only explanation for Maharshi

¹ Verses, 37-45.

Ramana's achievement of spiritual enlightenment at a very early stage of the saint's life, and though he had no training for it under the guidance of a spiritual teacher or knowledge of the necessary philosophic discipline.

Sri Ramana's life thus illustrates the truth of the Indian philosophic tradition established centuries ago, that a man sincerely given to spiritual endeavour, but who for some reason strays away from that path, will not lose altogether the fruits of his labour. On the other hand he will have the good fortune of being born in a family of devoted men, and there, will continue his efforts at self-realization. This is based on the maxim that "No one who works for God-Realization meets with an evil destiny".² In having this experience of the Supreme at an early age, the Saint of Arunachala was rivalling the great feat of Dhruva, son of Uttanapada, who succeeded in having a vision of the Lord even as a young boy.

Dhruva was not the only Puranic personage whom the Saint of Arunachala tried to emulate. He tried to do what young Nachiketas of the past did. Like Nachiketas, young Venkataramana, who later came to be called Sri Ramana, desired the way to conquer death. The fear of death suddenly took possession of young Venkataramana and the lad decided to solve the riddle of life. By reflecting on the problem of life and death and by careful experiment, the young boy understood the cause for the fear of death and the way of overcoming the grief caused by this dire calamity. He realised that it was the physical body that really perished and that the consciousness within the body survived. In other words, young Venkataramana understood the great truth that there was an inner Being, a Reality that persisted even after death and that this great principle was the witness of all the changing conditions of the physical body. In short, by an intuitive flash he became aware of the nature of the true Self.

Thus Sri Ramana came to know that the Self was entirely different from the body,

the senses and the mind. Answering a devotee who was curious to know the nature of the Self the Sage once said: "You ought to understand that by the Self neither the physical body nor the subtle body is meant. What you are told is that if you once know the Self within which all ideas exist, not excluding the idea of yourself, of others like you and of the world, you can realize the truth that there is a reality, a Supreme Truth which is the Self of all the world. You now see the Self of all the selves, the one Real, the Supreme, the eternal Self as distinct from the ego or individual being which is impermanent. You must not mistake the ego or the body-idea for the Self." And, just as he found the difference between the Self which was eternal and was constituted of pure consciousness and the body which was perishable and made up of matter, he also discovered the difference between the Self which was the pure spectator and the senses which suffered the same fate as the body. As for the mind, it was only an internal organ of sense and did not differ in any way from the rest of the senses. Summing up the difference between the Self and faculties, the Sage said: "I am not this physical body nor am I the five organs of sense perception: I am not the five organs of external activity, nor am I the five vital forces, nor am I even the thinking mind. When all these are eliminated, that which remains separate and alone by itself, its very nature Sat-chit-ananda, Existence-consciousness-bliss, that am I". Not less insistent was he in pointing out the necessity of completely eliminating the ego and reaching the egoless state.

In arriving at these conclusions independently, the great Saint was only confirming statements of the philosophic treatises of the past. The Kathopanishad had pointed out that it must be man's endeavour to distinguish the Self from the body.³ The Prasnopanishad had drawn a vivid distinction between the Self and the other elements by saying: "the mind and what is an object of the mind, intellect and what is an

² Gita, VI, 40.

³ Gita, VI, 17.

object of intellect, Self-consciousness and what is an object of Self-consciousness, thinking and what is an object of thinking — all these repair to the Supreme soul for dwelling.”⁴ The Bhagavad Gita had put forth a strong plea for the elimination of the ego by saying it was only the ignorant man who thought: “I am wealthy, born in a good family; who other is there like me? I will perform sacrifices; I will give in charity, I will enjoy myself.”⁵

Having thus become a Realised Soul, Sri Ramana Maharshi lead from the moment of realization the life of a **Sthitaprajna** or one of steadfast wisdom. He “discarded all desires of the mind and felt satisfied in the Self through the joy of the Self.”⁶ He became a true yogin, concentrated on the Spirit within and unattached to all things of the earth. Not that he did not take any interest in the life around him. Indeed it was his earnest desire to help all men around him who aspired to a divine life of spirituality and wisdom. The gates of his Ashram were open to everyone to come and find spiritual solace and obtain solutions of their moral problems. He read the daily papers and useful journals; and he kept himself well informed about men and things around him. We learn that on a certain occasion, the Sage started reciting lines from Saint Manikavachagar and soon felt so moved emotionally that he shed a few tears. On another occasion he seems to have corrected one Tenamma who committed an error in reading a passage from the Ribhu Gita and who was under the impression, like others around her, that he was in deep meditation. The love and tenderness of Sage Ramana became proverbial; and he won the confidence of even the animals of Ramanashram. His affection for the cow of the hermitage, Lakshmi, was remarkable. After the manner of an **avadhuta** or a God-minded devotee, he suffered without protest all incidence of pain. His conduct in silently enduring the blows of thieves who broke into his Ashram reminds one of the conduct of the great **avadhutha**, described in **Bhagavata**. All these activities of the Sage go to show that he was not trying to keep him-

self aloof from society, but was in it all the time. Only he was dwelling in the Self even when he was associating with worldly activities after the manner of a typical man of steadfast-mindedness (**Sthitaprajna**).

Indeed he did not believe in withdrawing himself from society completely. Such a move did not fall in line with the theory of Self which the Sages propounded. Talking of retirement and solitude on a certain occasion, he explained: “Abiding in the Self is solitude because there is nothing alien to the Self. Retirement must be from some one place or state to another. There is neither the one nor the other apart from the Self. All being the Self, retirement is impossible and inconceivable.” The Maharshi was keen on pointing out the universal presence of the Self and the necessity on the part of man to do his best to realize the Self. Nor was it a difficult process according to him. For he said in his characteristic quiet way: “The Self is always there. You have only to remove the veil obstructing the revelation of the Self. Once you realise the Self it becomes your direct and immediate experience. It is never lost.”

Sri Ramana was most logical in his approach to the problems of Self-realization. He did not stop merely at calling upon devotees to attempt Self-realization; he went further and explained the method one ought to take in order to realise this supreme goal.

He maintained that control of mind, curbing of desires and ethical ways of life were general aids for realization and emphasised meditation (**dhyana**) and enquiry (**vichara**) as the two essential ways of achieving the purpose. He taught that meditation or **dhyana** is regular battle, for it is an effort to keep hold of one thought to the exclusion of all else. Continuing his observations on meditation he observed: “When meditation is well established, it can no more be given up.” As for enquiry, he said that it

⁴ Gita, IV, 8.

⁵ Gita, XVI, 15.

⁶ Ibid., II, 55.

was earnest Self-enquiry that really hastened the knowledge of the Self.

It is interesting to note in this context that the Sage of Arunachala was focussing the attention of the religious-minded on two important lessons which the **Upanishads**, the **Gita** and the **Brahma-Sutra** taught on the problem of realization. The **Upanishads** and **Gita** repeatedly speak about the utility of meditation; and the **Gita** in particular speaks eloquently of the yogi or the person who practises meditation. Krishna calls upon Arjuna to become a yogi for such a one was "superior to the ascetics and superior even to those versed in sacred lore. In fact, he was superior even to those who performed actions with motive."⁷ As for the importance of enquiry, the **Brahma-Sutras** of Badarayana make it the starting point of Vedantic study. The opening sutra of that text says: "Then, therefore the inquiry into Brahman."⁸

All this should not be interpreted that the Sage of Arunachala had nothing new to offer to the development of Indian Philosophic thought or that he just taught what the ancient Indian seers had done. It only shows that the life and teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi rested firmly on the foundations of the early philosophic thought of India. The contribution of Sri Ramana was unique in the sense that he approached the problem of Self-realization from a new angle. He did not worry much to make the point that the soul and the Supreme were identical, though he had complete faith in the doctrine. He was more keen on drawing attention to the natural state of the soul. To a devoted enquirer he said: "Self-enquiry, 'who am I?', is a different technique from the meditation: 'I am Siva' or 'I am He'. I rather emphasise self-knowledge for you are first concerned with yourself before you know the world or its Lord. The 'I am He' or 'I am Brahman' meditation is more or less mental, but the quest for the Self of which I speak is a direct method and is superior to it". Explaining the theory of natural state, the Sage said: "Consciousness is the Self of which everyone is aware. No one is ever away from his self and therefore

everyone is in fact self-realized; only, and this is the great mystery — people do not know this and want to realise the Self. Realization consists only in getting rid of the false idea that one is not realized. It is not anything new to be acquired. It must already exist or it would not be eternal, and only what is eternal is worth striving for." In other words the Sage was saying that the soul in its natural state was **Sat-chit-ananda** and that man had to realize this by enlightenment and removal of ignorance. The Sage himself brought out the significance of the theory of natural state when he said, "To remain without question or doubt is your natural state ... the Self is always there. You have only to remove the veil obstructing the revelation of the Self". And in this theory of the natural state, or original state, as it is also known, the Guru or the spiritual teacher did not find an important place. The Sage himself had no spiritual teacher and did not believe that one was absolutely necessary for an aspirant. He maintained that there was but one **Guru** and that was one's own Self: "One must not look upon the Guru as a person; he is not anything else than the real Self of the disciple. When the Self is realized, then there is neither Guru nor disciple". The theory also did not give an important place to analysing the causes of pain as do other philosophic systems. Rather, it insisted on removing human pain and suffering.

A remarkable feature for which the Sage of Arunachala became famous was the great silence he maintained. For a time after he obtained Realization, he remained silent. It was only during the latter part of his life that he broke his silence. Of course, **mouna** or silence was considered a penance⁹ by people of the past. Lord Krishna pointed out that one of the characteristic features of a devotee was **mouna** or practice of silence.¹⁰ But what is to be noted is that Sri Ramana made it his chief instrument for Self-realization and for communicating his teaching,

⁷ *Gita*, VI, 46.

⁸ *Brahmasutra*, I, I, 1.

⁹ *Gita*, XVII, 16.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, XII, 19.

although it may look odd to say that he taught in silence. The Sage himself spoke highly of this holy practice and said : "That stage which transcends speech and thought is *mouna*, it is meditation without mental activity. Deep meditation is eternal speech. Silence is ever-speaking ; it is the perennial flow of language". When visitors came to him and told him their problems he did not always answer but sometimes merely smiled at the devotees silently. And this conduct on the part of the Sage worked ; for many a visitor has admitted that his problem was solved somehow. Surely, this kind of silence on the part of the Sage was more creative.

Such was the unique personality of Sage Ramana. Like all other Sages of the past,

this Saint of modern times desired to help those who sought to progress on the path of spirituality. While some of his methods look strange, his object was always to make a man better and to make human society holy. The life and teachings of the great Saint Ramana, thus bear out the saying of the *Bhagavata* :

"Yoga or Sankhya or righteousness or a study of the Vedas or asceticism or renunciation or sacrifice or good deeds do not captivate me. Neither vows nor worship nor holy places are able to capture me. I can only be won by the fellowship of saints, which brings to an end all attachment."¹¹

¹¹ *Bhagavata*, II, 12, 1.

OUTER CHANGE AND INNER POISE

By IRMGARD GEORGE SCHULTZ

Looking at the sky with its millions of twinkling stars, we may often wonder how many of them still exist, since everything in the universe is in mutation. The evidence of our senses deceives us. Stars that we think we see may be thousands of light years away and the light they once emitted be still travelling towards us when they themselves have already perished. The whole universe alternately takes form and perishes. Kalpa and Pralaya the Hindus call the process. The ancient Germanic Edda also knew of it.

"In primeval times when Ymir lived
There was no sea, there was no earth,
no sky there was,
Nothing was to be seen but a yawning
abyss without life".

Then the giant Ymir created the earth. But after millions of years a mutation took place described by the Edda as the end of the world :

"The sun becomes dark, the earth sinks
into the sea,
The bright stars fall crashing from the
sky : the end of the world is come."

Then a new era :

"The earth arises once more in eternal
green from the sea,
All evil disappears and a Power from
above ends all fighting."

Similar destruction and renewal is described in the Bible, in the 'Book of Revelations'. "Fire fell from the sky and consumed all. And I saw a new sky and a new earth, for the first sky and the first earth had perished, and the sea was no more ; and I saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem."

Everywhere change and mutation. And the same in human life with its passing clouds of light and shadow. The same with human death and rebirth. Few indeed there are who can keep their inner poise when death approaches, when the sun of life becomes dark, the stars fall and everything the flesh is heir to is taken away ! The only way is to give up all the wishes of the human self and remain untouched in the noise of the world, feeling only the pure sense of being in the heart, is union with the Absolute which remains unaffected by the creation and dissolution not only of a human life but of the entire universe.

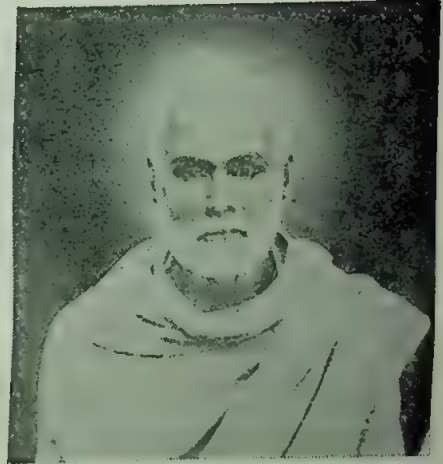
NARAYANA GURU

By JOHN SPIERS

The whole of Kerala knows about Narayana Guru. At least two million Malayalis as well as a large group in South Kanara acknowledge themselves as his followers. The Guru's birthday, which takes place in the lion month (August-September) around the harvest festival time of Onam, is an official holiday. On New Year's Day thousands of devotees go on a pilgrimage to his shrine at Sivagiri, near Varkala, some twenty miles north of Trivandrum. The math there is the headquarters of the Sri Narayana Dharma Sangham, a body of sannyasins who have looked after the properties left behind by the Guru since his death in 1928.

There are dozens of temples, from Mangalore to the Cape which were installed by him. In the Guru's name there are many large colleges as well as several missions and dispensaries. An organization called the Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam, more familiarly called the SNDPY (wrongly believed to have been founded by the Guru) plays a big role in the communal politics of Kerala.

Apart from these social and religious establishments, there is the Narayana Gurukula, a Guru-disciple family under the founder and head, Nataraja Guru who, as the spiritual successor and sat-sishya of Narayana Guru, has dedicated his life to the way and the teaching of the Guru. This institution has a contemplative basis, with ashrams and centres in many parts of India, as well as overseas, in Singapore, France, Belgium and the U.S.A. It has been my privilege for nearly twenty years to be affiliated to this growing Guru-family which is directly linked with Narayana Guru under the traditional method of transmission of teaching from Guru to disciple (Guru-sishya parampara). This was known in the ancient world of Europe where the



ashram-schools transmitted philosophic wisdom from the time of Thales for over a thousand years, until the Christian emperor Justinian outlawed these institutions in the sixth century A.D.

The basic biographical facts about Narayana Guru may be briefly stated as follows: He was born in 1854 in Chempazhandy, a small village near Trivandrum. His father was a farmer. The boy Nanu was of a retiring and studious disposition. Despite caste obstacles, he managed to secure a mastery of Sanskrit. He was drawn to the philosophic life and wandered, searching, meditating and studying, over a period of years about which very little is known, except such items as his living in a cave on a hill near Kanyakumari, and his association with a wise man known as Chattambi Swami, and with an expert in the esoterics of hatha yoga called Thykkad Ayyavu. To the extent that they confirmed his own insights they can be called his Gurus.

By the time he was thirty our subject became revered as a recluse sitting under a tree by a stream; and people sought him

out more and more because of the kindly advice he gave. He began to take on the role of a Guru, and signed himself as such. He led a public life from this time until his death at the age of seventy-four.

The word Guru, which simply means a destroyer of darkness or ignorance, upsets a lot of people who see authoritarianism which disagrees with their sense of equality and justice. But the highest wisdom, known in India as Brahma-vidya (the science of the Absolute), which is a way of life as well as a body of knowledge, demands at least the disciplined attention which even ordinary teachers with any expertise must insist on in their pupils, for otherwise not even the very notions of equality and justice could be taught. The true Guru also, it may be said, teaches a freedom from all tyranny, and an equality and justice which goes far beyond the relativistic forms of these values which today are mere debased currency. In India there is a religious freedom which has no fixed creed to bind it together, but from the Himalayas to the Cape, covering both orthodoxy and heterodoxy, one grand connective principle has been respected for all teachers of spiritual freedom. Guruhood viewed in this correct way transcends the social world of belief or caste distinction.

As most of the Guru's followers were drawn from the bottom levels of the strictly theocratic society of the Travancore and Cochin of those days, the Guru had to face right away this endemic disease called caste.

Wisdom crosses all man-made frontiers. Wise men have come from all ranks of life. Equally, kings and proletarians have sat at the feet of wise men. Narayana Guru was at one and the same time conservative in his respect for wisdom traditions, and revolutionary in revaluating, restating, and presenting afresh the perennial truth. In the Dhammapada the Buddha revalued the notions of brahmin and pariah (outcaste) in terms of behaviour types, and much later Vyasa in the Bhagavad Gita amplified this conception while at the same time saying that a wise man sees a holy brahmin, an ele-

phant, a dog and even a dog-eater as the same. Narayana Guru went to the heart of the matter by invoking biological proof, equating caste (jati) with species. He summed it up in one of his best known works in Malayalam (except for the first verse which, for reasons of poetic justice, he wrote in Sanskrit) which is worth quoting here in full. It is called Jati Mimamsa.

CASTE CRITICALLY EXAMINED¹

1. Man's humanity marks out the human kind
Even as bovinity proclaims a cow.
Brahminhood and such are not thus-
wise ;
None see this truth, alas !
2. Of one God, of one faith and of one kind
is man ;
Of one womb, of one form ; difference
here there is none.
3. Within a species, is it not, that offspring
truly breed ?
The community of man thus viewed, to
a single caste belongs.
4. Of the human species is even a brahmin
born, as is the pariah too ;
Where then is the difference in caste as
between man and man ?
5. In bygone days of a pariah woman the
great sage Parasara was born,
As even he of Vedic-aphorism fame of
a maid of the fisher-folk.

Verse two has become a slogan among the Guru's followers. But the full composition reveals the scientific approach of the Guru. The last verse refers to Veda-Vyasa or Badarayana, author of the Brahma-sutras, recognized by the most orthodox brahmins as among the holiest of their Gurus. There is a touch of humour in bringing in evidence from the canonical scriptures to show the absurdity of common closed-in notions of caste. The Guru gave a final touch to the situation by training untouchable boys to be temple priests. With their clean dress,

¹ The translations are by Nataraja Guru.

ability to chant in Sanskrit and conduct ritual properly, their vegetarian diet and disciplined ashram behaviour, they were indistinguishable from their brahmin counterparts.

Religion too came under the scrutiny of the Guru. He declared that it did not matter what religion a man followed, provided it made him a better man. To pit one religion against another was wrong. It only brought both into disrepute. He once declared there could be as many religions or beliefs as there were human beings. The sense of the numinous or the holy was the common principle to be found everywhere.

The Guru's sense of humour was seen on one occasion when he called attention to some devotees who were offering flowers and fruits to his own portrait in a shrine. "Look at that", he remarked to a group who gathered round him, "Here I stand in reality without my breakfast and still waiting for it; but my painting gets all the elaborate ritualist attention. That is due to the exaggerations of religion!"

The Guru composed nearly fifty works in Sanskrit and Malayalam. He wrote simple prayers as well as profoundly philosophical poems. The *Atmopadesha Satakam* (One Hundred Verses Addressed to the Self) is a guide to self-understanding full of original illustration. For example, two verses provide a "laboratory proof" of the sameness of the Self in all:

"Who sits there in the dark? Declare!"
says one;

Whereupon another, himself intent to find,
in turn

Asks, hearing the first: "Who may you
even be?"

For both, the word of response is but one.
The repeated "I, I" contemplated from
within

Is not many but remains one; divergent
egoity

Being multiple, with the totality of such
The Self-substance too continuity assumes.

Another major work of Narayana Guru is called *Darshana Mala* (A Garland

of Philosophical Visions). This is in Sanskrit and consists of one hundred verses, arranged into ten chapters. It covers the whole of Brahavidya (the Science of the Absolute), from various points of view (*darshanas*), from cosmogony to Nirvana, dealing with epistemology, ontology, adoration (*bhakti*), action (*karma*) and other topics, bringing all together in a unified framework which has the Self or the Absolute as its norm, standard or principle. This work cannot be quoted piecemeal. It is a monumental treatise.

Despite his great learning as a model Guru and teacher of the science of the Absolute, the Guru was a man of plain and simple ways, insisting on cleanliness, orderliness, and common sense. He preferred direct contact with perhaps some poor but sincere peasant, to the noisy fuss of public gatherings presided over by VIP's.

In writing this thumb-nail sketch of Narayana Guru, I have chosen to treat him as a reasonable man and a Guru who stood for the highest wisdom or spirituality for which India has been famed. In doing so, I have tried to avoid the social and historical aspects, because the river of time runs fast and what seemed important at one period loses its significance later when fresh problems emerge out of the flux of relative events. Not that relative happenings should be undervalued. But they tend to obscure the eternally significant in the subject. I have also avoided all comment on the miraculous with its exaggerations of piety, ecstasies and wonders. Not that these things do not exist, but I consider them secondary features to the main theme of a contemplative scientist or scientific contemplative for whom the wonder of the Absolute was always present, but who, at the same time, cautioned his followers about the dangers of psychism. My subject was neither a social reformer nor a Christian saint. He was a Guru, that is the beginning and the end of the matter; and he belongs to mankind, as an embodiment of the wisdom which he re-stated in such a way that all might benefit.

In conclusion, readers of **The Mountain Path** with its non-rivalistic emphasis on sustaining the same wisdom as manifested in the Maharshi, may be interested in the following stanzas which Narayana Guru ³ composed on a visit to Bhagavan Sri Ramana in 1916 and which obviously had the Maharshi in mind : It is called Municharya Panchakam :

THE WAY OF THE RECLUSE

1. For the hermit whose attachments are gone,
His arm, makes it not for him a pillow ?
The earth whereon his footsteps fall
Gaining sin-dispelling power,
Makes it not for him a couch ?
For such as he, what use of goods here ?
Ever merged as his mind is in the verity
of 'That thou art'
His bliss transcends inclusively all
forms of joy.
2. Desireless as he is, for nothing ever asking,
Partaking of food brought to him by chance
The body just to sustain ;
From all cares free, sleeping on the thoroughfare,
Ever immersed in the vision of the Self,
The hermit, attaining to the unity of life and Self-supreme,

He comes to his own state, radiant —
everlasting —
Of Being-Knowing-Joy.

- 3 In discourse the recluse excels,
But often restrained in words, he is seen
here as one ignorant,
Wandering, sitting, or standing still ;
Having once come to this changing
body, sanctioned by time,
He ever contemplates the state
Of Selfhood's uncut Consciousness
supreme.
4. Outside the scope of what is spoken of
as existing or non-existing,
As unthinkable, ungraspable, minute,
not-short, stainless or supreme,
Immobile, erect, or most exalted,
He seeks to attain that all-fourth
(turiya) state
Turning away from both this and that
As one who aims properly
To reach beyond both being and non-
being.
5. Let him live in his own home, or in the forest,
Or at the water's edge — no matter —
With mind ever fixed in the Absolute
The Yogi ever dwells, seeing all here
in terms of Selfhood ;
Like a mirage in a desert land.
He enjoys bliss, that Silent One
Contemplating that Absolute supreme
which is beyond all compare.

THIS

By L. P. YANDELL

No problems —
Just 'me'.
No 'me' —
Just 'This'.
Ah — This!

WHAT IS REINCARNATED ?

By DOROTHY C. DONATH

What is "reincarnation"—and who or what reincarnates ?

Dear to the heart of modern man, and of Western man in particular, is the cult of the individual—of the personal ego who struggles his way through life seeking to overcome not only the obstacles in his own career, but the forces of nature as well—looking outward for "fresh fields to conquer," seldom inward save toward a vaguely envisioned "soul" which he has been taught to believe he is, or has—hoping for eternal rewards in heaven if he is "good", or fearing eternal punishments in hell if he is not. To him, this one life is the sum of his human existence; "evolution" he relegates to the phenomenal worlds; "eternity" has little meaning for him save in terms of a "final judgment" and his own personal fate.

How very circumscribed is this view—how lacking in opportunity for the acquisition of knowledge, for continued growth, for development of inner potentialities and the unfolding of Wisdom, for realization of the essential spiritual nature of man, and of Enlightenment itself! Growth, in the full evolutionary sense, cannot be accomplished in a day—and "a day" is all that the limited span of one short earth-life can represent on the cosmic scale of eternity. Enmeshed in this belief, what answer can there be to the physical, mental, and environmental inequalities that confront children new-born into the world? How account for their different paths and ends, except to say that "blind fate" or some arbitrary Power outside of ourselves has capriciously thrust them, willy-nilly, into a world not of their own making? Would a human parent knowingly afflict his children with such a burden? How much less would the wise and immutable Law of Life decree such punishments to its many manifestations?

But there is another and very different view and one that has had a long history even in many of the philosophies of the West—that of reincarnation, or successive rebirths to allow for spiritual evolution through man's own efforts over a sufficient length of time. This view can be divided into two main schools of thought; let us consider each one carefully.

According to the first, "reincarnation" means the successive rebirths of an ego-soul, monad, or entity, inhabiting a new body each round, and carrying forward a process of individual evolution (or sometimes retrogression) depending upon the thoughts and consequent actions that dominate it in each succeeding life, until eventually it returns, disciplined and enlightened, to the Source from whence it came. The controlling force here (as in other views as well) is Karma, action and reaction, or the Law of Cause and Effect, which governs the "fate" of each individual according to the uses he makes of his privileges as a thinking entity with free will to follow either "good" or "evil" paths.

This doctrine of an enduring, personal self—passing from life to life no matter how variously "clothed"—appeals to those who still cling to an ego—however rarified—who still cling, however unwittingly, to the "little self", and cannot yet envision a higher SELF in which each one realizes his true identity with Universal Consciousness and ceases to differentiate between me and thee, this and that, knower and known, and all the dualities that seem so real on the relative plane of ordinary human thought. This doctrine of a discrete, reincarnating entity contains its own contradiction, for how can unity with the Divine Source, the Absolute, ever be realized while belief in a separate self remains?

According to the second view, "reincarnation" signifies a carrying forward under the Law of Karma, not of an illusory, personal ego-soul, but of the life-force, the stream of consciousness—the character—built up in each succeeding life on preceding causal foundations, and creating in its turn the Karmic forces which will affect the course of its future incarnations. They deny the doctrine of an enduring ego—which to them is as perishable and transient as the body it is presumed to inhabit. They compare the reincarnation process to the lighting of a new candle from the flame of an old one—the flame goes on, but the candle is consumed. Each newly kindled flame takes its character from the preceding one, but is not identical with it, nor is the candle the same.

No one, however, disputes the fact that Karma underlies the reincarnation process. Breaking free from this Birth-and-Death cycle—the attainment of Nirvana—can only be accomplished by the will to seek and unfold one's own Enlightenment, the effort to uncover that Reality which lies latent, buried in most of us under layers of spiritual ignorance and delusion as to our real nature and the meaning and purpose of life.

Which of these two schools of thought provides the most logical answer to the reincarnation problem?

While one must reason from the standpoint of his own understanding at any given time and level, I do not believe that merely doctrinal questions, or even semantics, are of primary importance here—for the basic realizations gained over many thousands of years by the seers and saints of all the world's great religions are in essence the same. Let us consider some of them, and continue with the question: What is it that reincarnates?

It is evident that all the component elements of the reincarnation process are in a continual state of flux, or becoming—nothing is static or "fixed"—and that the moving force behind it all must be a mental one—not on the relative and human, but on the Cosmic and spiritual scale. Let us call it

MIND for want of a better term, for we must use words and concepts in the course of a discussion, although these are only stepping-stones, "intellectual approximations", as someone has said, "to what, in the end, must be realized intuitively."

It is obvious that the physical body and its senses, which dissolve at death, cannot reincarnate. Then what of this personal self, this "I" on which most of us set such great store? Let us, for the sake of argument, call its elements "The Five Skandhas," or "The Five Aggregates", as the Buddha did. These consist of (1) the physical body and its senses—already considered and dismissed; (2) feelings and sensations (dependent upon the body and its senses); (3) emotional reactions or volition (dependent upon feelings and sensations); (4) perceptions leading to memory (dependent upon all that preceded them); and (5) consciousness. Take all these away at death, and what have you left? Certainly nothing that can be called a "self". Here no thing remains to reincarnate.

Is there something more?

In the living being a constant interaction is taking place between the Five Skandhas—and "action" and "reaction" is the heart of Karma. What is it that animates this stream of consciousness, this character of which we have spoken and, for that matter, the force of Karma itself? Let us go back to the term we first used—MIND, Consciousness—the Source and Ground from which both logic and intuition tell us that all manifestation must arise. Some call it "The Void", or "The Plenum Void"—THAT from which all manifested things emerge (although it does not consist of them), and to which all manifested things return. Allied with this, and forming the bridge between them, is the Ālaya, or Store Consciousness (in a sense akin to the "Collective Unconscious" of Western psychology), where the memories of man and of all sentient life lie waiting to be tapped when the time is ripe. Here we find wheels within wheels, symbolized in Buddhism by "The Wheel of Life", turning purposefully and slowly in the natural course of evolution, turning more

rapidly as the enlightened mind and will follow the Path and depart not from it. Thus we see that MIND alone is unchanging, and the Ground of our being, alone, eternal. All life, as an emanation of MIND, partakes of its nature, and so continues in repeatedly manifested forms until Ultimate Enlightenment—Nirvana—frees us from the Wheel of Birth-and-Death.

Due to the limitations of language we must use the personal pronoun when speaking of "his" or "my" former incarnations, of "his" or "my" future ones; but the little "I" is as transient as the body that clothes it. To speak of one who reincarnates, if we are not careful in our thinking, draws us back to the stultifying concept of

a permanent ego-soul and all its concomitant illusions. But identification with Universal Mind, Spirt, Thatness, or Thusness—the Ground of all being—opens for us an endless vista of Consciousness far beyond anything conceivable by the little self—a Consciousness beyond either good or evil, diversity or unity—inexpressible, and only to be gained through Ultimate Enlightenment itself.

We carry our future in the palms of our hands today; and so there is hope and final certainty of an unending vista of LIFE, of a supernal State of Consciousness whose glimmerings, even now, lighten our inmost hearts as each travels his Path toward the Goal.

All these mantras have intrinsic power in them and when you chant them continuously they create in you harmonious vibrations. Your disturbed mind becomes calm and serene. Even diseases in the body disappear. Inharmonious vibrations in the body cause ailments. The chanting of the mantra brings in balanced vibrations and removes all distempers. First it must be applied to control and harmonise the mind. You will be filled with divine harmony. By chanting the mantras you will see that discordant vibrations give place to harmonious vibrations. Irritability, bad thoughts, distractions, all disappear. Your wild nature is tamed. All selfish desires and instincts are subdued. You become a completely changed person.

—SWAMI RAMDAS, *God-Experience*, p. 113-4.

* * * *

The wise declare that there is really only One Immutable Being. When you relinquish passions the One remains, the many disappear.

—Avadhuta Gita, 1, 22.

* * * *

God has become that which I am and has made me that which He is. — JACOB BOEHME.

I AM ALPHA AND OMEGA

By GLADYS DE MEUTER

Saint Anselm, consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury in the year 1093, once spoke to an abbot in charge of bringing up youths in the cloister : 'Solid food is given to one who is able to digest it, but a babe, if deprived of its milk and fed such fare would most certainly not benefit, but choke on it. We may apply this to enquirers after Truth who must be given spiritual sustenance according to their inner capacity to receive. The advanced may be offered the solid food of patience in adversity, returning good for evil and nurturing love for one's foes ; whereas the babes in spiritual training must receive kind encouragement, gentleness, understanding and loving patience. In this way, you will by Divine Guidance, lead both the weak and the strong to God.'

There are many paths leading to the Summit, and pilgrims seeking Truth are given sustenance according to their temperament and state of development.

The wise pilgrim does not indulge in satisfying mental curiosity and refrains from asking questions pertaining to the ego and its activities. Having accepted the truth that I AM pure BEING, with neither beginning nor end, but everpresent in the Eternal Now, he is intent on eradicating the source of selfishness, misery and discord which he knows to be none else but the spurious 'I' or ego.

The aim of religion is to annihilate selfishness in order to attain selflessness or that Perfect Equanimity where the 'I-I' shines in luminous splendour.

The wise pilgrim also refrains from condemning the viewpoint of others, but understands that in time they will no longer require the ladder which aided ascent. If the seeker is not able to grasp the highest Truth, then the doctrine of reincarnation is expounded. The law of causation is explain-

ed : 'As a man sows, so shall he reap.' Earth is likened to a school-room to which the jiva returns until the lessons have been learnt and duality transcended to embrace Reality.

When Jesus walked among the hills of Judaea and word spread among the people that a great prophet was newly risen, many wondered whether the Nazarene was Elias or some other holy man who had been dead for centuries.

That Jesus possessed knowledge of this belief we know from the question which he put to his disciples : 'Whom say the people that I am ?' When speaking of John the Baptist, Jesus stated : 'But I say unto you that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, and have done unto him whatsoever they listed'. And those whose inner ears were opened, heard and understood the words of the Master.

At the second council of Constantinople, A.D. 553, the doctrine of reincarnation was proclaimed a heresy : 'Whoever shall uphold the mythical doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul, and the consequent opinion of its return, let him be anathema.'

Those who reject the Law of Karma whereby Man receives the just payment of his sowing, are not able to reconcile themselves to the teaching : 'God is Love'. They encounter sorrow, pain, hatred and violence on this earth-plane and consequently attribute this disharmony to an awe-inspiring Judge Whose fearful hand deals out death and destruction as well as life and happiness. That the Sovereign Power remains aloof from the ego-world is beyond the understanding of some, yet this truth has been taught throughout the ages by the Masters.

Gautama Buddha uttered these significant words : 'By one's self evil is done ; by one's

self one suffers ... Both purity and impurity belong to one's self ... wealthy indeed is he who enjoys the riches of the Path — the wealth of those who are ever intent on seeking the Highest Truth.'

And Sri Ramakrishna said: "Beyond Maya, vidya and avidya is Brahman. The world consists of the illusory duality of good and evil but Brahman is beyond these.' You may enquire: 'How then can one understand pain, misery and sorrow?' The reply will be that these concern only the jiva — Brahman is not at all affected by them. Just as a snake may inject poison through its bite yet remain unaffected by the poison it carries, so is Brahman beyond the illusion of duality."

Meister Eckhart, the Christian mystic states: 'There is within the soul a Spirit, beyond the fringe of time and the world ... itself wholly spiritual — nameless and formless It is One alone.'

Beyond the limitations imposed by an unreal ego, lies infinite freedom where space, time and causation do not exist. The renunciation of 'I' and 'mine' is the Way to attain liberation from an imaginary bondage.

Jesus says: 'He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.' What is meant here,

is that the ego must be crucified so that resurrection or awakening from the tomb of ignorance may take place. Unless Man detaches himself from desiring things found in this evanescent world he will continue to slumber in ignorance, and will carry the heavy burden of transient joys and suffering until such time as Grace grants Self-Knowledge.

To concern oneself with the comings and goings of the ego is not wisdom, for although Man may seek to understand the mystery of birth and death, in truth neither birth nor death takes place. There is no Liberation to be attained or Self to be Realized. Tat Tvam Asi — 'Thou art That' — Absolute Being! I AM remains unaffected by the apparent rebirths of the ego, and the ardent follower of Truth who wishes to be released from the bonds imposed by the impostor 'I' must release himself from the thought that he is the body or that the thought-world is his Self.

Surrendering to that Peace Which is Eternal, and which passeth all understanding, the pilgrim may watch the shadow-play of the ego with the vision of the Wise who teach that this ego-life is but a dew, a dream, a bubble — the tinkle of a camel's bell. It is the Lila of the Lord, and in the words of a living Saint: 'a game of Love.'

The reason cannot attain to Him or name Him or know Him ... nor can any affirmation or negation be applied to Him ... He transcends all affirmation as the perfect and unique cause of all things, and all negation by the pre-eminence of His simple and absolute nature, free from every limitation and beyond them all.

— PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS.

* * * *

If, then, a man sees himself become one with the One, he has in himself a likeness of the One; and if he passes out of himself as an image to its archetype he has reached the end of his journey. This may be called the flight of the alone to the Alone. — PLOTINUS.

CAUSALITY AND REBIRTH

By DR. W. J. HENN COLLINS

THE MIDDLE WAY IN CLEAR WORDS

Offered with gratitude and respect to the memory of the Masters Nagarjuna and Chandrakirti who composed the verses and commentary of the *Prasannapada Madhya-makavrtti*.

Shall I say it again ? In order to arrive there,
To arrive where you are, to get from where you are not,
You must go by a way wherein there is no ecstasy.
In order to arrive at what you do not know
You must go by a way which is the way of ignorance.
In order to possess what you do not possess
You must go by the way of dispossession.
In order to arrive at what you are not
You must go through the way in which you are not.
And what you do not know is the only thing you know
And what you own is what you do not own
And where you are is where you are not.

— T. S. ELIOT,
" East Coker "

The method of critical analysis has always been central to Buddhism and its basic doctrines of Anatman and Pratitya Samutpada are the outcome of this. The Buddha analysed a living being into its component elements. Thus existence was analysed into five groups of the sensuous (rupa), consciousness (vijñāna), discrimination (saṃjñā), feeling (vedāna), and volition (saṃskāra). It was analysed as a whole, i.e. consciousness with all that of which it is aware. The result was that a permanent entity (atman) could not be found. The component elements went to form only a nominal entity subject to perpetual change, but the finding of only impermanent phenomena is not the same as denying an unconditional ultimate reality which the Buddha actually affirmed. An existence was thus regarded as a continuously flowing stream of discrete moments made up of elements of the five groups. There was no underlying substance to these moments. This conception has been likened to a cine film. It contained nothing permanent or substantial. The momentary elements were conceived as obeying causal laws. But this conception was adapted to

the character of elements which could neither change nor move but only appear and disappear. Causation was called dependently co-ordinated origination (pratitya samutpada) or dependent existence. Causality was thus assumed to exist between moments only, the arising of every moment being co-ordinated with the momentary existence of a number of other moments, "If there is this, there appears that."

Buddhism denies substance and all that it implies. Existence is momentary, unique, discrete, with no abiding entity. Substance and what is universal or identical is rejected as illusory, due to wrong view (avidyā). Admittedly, considerable difficulty was encountered in fitting in this theory with the doctrine of Karma and rebirth. This may be regarded as a Modal view of reality. This is one of the two main currents of Indian philosophy. The other is the Substance view of the Brahmanical tradition having its origin in the atman doctrine of the Upanishads. Here reality is conceived on the pattern of an inner core or substrate, identical or immutable though

surrounded by impermanence and change. In the Advaita Vedanta, its most radical form, the reality of appearance, change and plurality is held to be false. The Sankhya and the Nyaya uphold a substantial rather than a modal view. Taking substance as real makes for unity and integration of experience. It also makes perception, memory and personal identity easier but change more difficult to explain. Suffering and bondage are due to the wrong identification of the atman with anatman:

"Identifying the self with this non-self — this is the bondage of man, which is due to his ignorance, and brings in its train the miseries of birth and death. It is through this that he considers the evanescent body as real, and identifying himself with it, nourishes, bathes and preserves it by means of agreeable sense objects, by which he becomes bound as the caterpillar by the threads of its cocoon."

(Shankara. *Vivekachudamani*, 187.)

The fully developed abhidharma metaphysic is a consistent and comprehensive system based on the modal or anatma standpoint. If the problem for the systems based on the substantial or atma position is how to account for change, difference and plurality, here it is to account for the appearance of permanence, identity and universality. To account for apparent difference in the one case and identity in the other, both make use of the agencies of avidya and maya, the veiling and projecting powers of wrong view (*mithya-drsti*).

Thus two consistent and logical systems of metaphysics have been built on the opposing concepts atman and anatman. After more or less argument and debate, an acute and objective mind must have come to the conclusion that the fault did not lie with this or that system, but that the inherent contradiction was due to Reason attempting to describe the unconditioned in terms of the empirical. Such an antinomical conflict results when speculative metaphysics attempts to extend the forms of thought beyond their proper field.

The realization of this insoluble contradiction between the two standpoints led to the emergence of the Madhyamika dialectic. The systems of the atma tradition represent the thesis and the abhidharma system the antithesis of the dialectic. This is a form of the same conflict as an attempt to answer Vacchagotta's questions on ultimate things to the Buddha would have elicited. It was left to Nagarjuna to develop the Madhyamika to its full extent. Reason involves itself in deep and insoluble conflict when it tries to go beyond phenomena to seek their ultimate ground. Any fact of experience when analysed reveals the gaping flaws in its seeming homogeneity. It loses every meaning except in relation to other entities, but these in turn depend on others and so on *ad infinitum*. Everyday commonsense declines to pursue this as irrelevance. Philosophical systems owing to their attachment to a particular view are blind to these flaws. Those who maintain the world has a real existence are wrong, because on deep penetration the world with all its manifold phenomena is found to be essentially relative and therefore ultimately unreal. And those who advocate non-existence or non-being are also wrong because they are denying even the phenomenal reality of the world. Eternalism and Nihilism are both false. Intellect gives us four categories — existence, non-existence, both and neither and involves itself in sixty-two antinomies. It cannot give us Reality. Reality transcends all the categories and at the same time transcends all the antinomies. But it has to be directly realized through spiritual experience. In it the subject-object duality which is the basic cause of suffering is transcended.

Before the mighty strokes of Nagarjuna's destructive dialectic, which was later continued by his able commentator Chandrakirti, the entire structure of the phenomenal world collapses like a house of cards when the phenomena are held to be real in themselves. However considered as phenomena from the empirical standpoint making up our everyday world they are real enough. Such phenomena are the individual subject

and external objects, space and time, matter, motion and causality. also the Four Noble Truths.

Nagarjuna and Chandrakirti did not attempt to sustain a point of view — or build a system of philosophy — except it might be said the negation of all views. They concentrated on showing up the inconsistencies and contradictions in the views and philosophical systems of others.

Because of the central position of pratitya samutpada in Buddhist thought it is not surprising that the Madhyamika or Shunya-vada school should devote particular attention to causality. Pratitya samutpada is interpreted as shunyata.

The Buddhist, Brahmanical, Sankhya and Jaina systems all agree that the principle of causality governs all phenomena. Before the advent of the Madhyamika or Shunyavada, it was taken as ultimately real. Thus the problem of the Madhyamika was to show that causality and other categories were of empirical value only. They are a convenient description for the texture of phenomena. This conclusion Shunyavada establishes by showing that all the possible ways in which causality and the categories can be understood under the terms of identity, difference or both or neither, are riddled with contradiction. It is obviously necessary to differentiate between cause and effect, and yet at the same time to identify them. Thus their relation cannot be conceived as identity, difference or both, nor is it no relation.

Four alternative views are usually considered regarding causality. The effect may be considered as the self-expression of the cause, or caused by factors other than itself, or both, or neither. The last alternative amounts to a denial of causation, as it means that things are produced at random. The third alternative is really a compound of the first two. This leaves the first two as the principal alternatives to be considered. Self-production, or the identity of cause and effect (satkarya vada) is the Sankhya view of causation. Buddhism holds the opposite view that they are different (asatkarya

vada). Dialectical criticism discloses the inherent flaw in each conception.

Self-production or the identity of cause and effect will first be considered. A thing cannot arise out of itself. If the effect is already existent in its cause, it is already an existing fact requiring no further production; if the effect does not exist in its cause, nothing can produce it. Nobody says the son of a barren woman was a king. But the entity produced must be different from its cause. If cause and effect were identical, how is one to function as cause and the other as effect? If it is supposed that initially the cause was potential and then it becomes actual, a change of states rather than substances taking place, the question then becomes what brings about this change of state? This question is very pertinent with regard to the primeval matter (prakriti) of the Sankhya. What causes it to pass from the state of pure potentiality to manifestation, if not the self (purusha) which is however held to be radically separate from the primeval matter?

Turning now to causality in the Abhidharma, which is based on the view of asatkarya vada (production from another — non-identity of cause and effect) four kinds of causes or conditions (pratayas) are usually enumerated in Abhidharma treatises. The Abhidharma of the Sarvastivadins which was criticised in particular by Nagarjuna will be considered here. The four causes or conditions are hetu, alambana, samanantara and adhipati. They do not bear much resemblance to the Aristotelian fourfold division of causes. The hetu is the direct cause corresponding in some respects to the material cause. It is defined as that which directly brings about the result, for example, the seed producing a sprout. Alambana is the object-condition which is taken as the cause in the production of knowledge and mental (citta and caitta). All samskṛta and asamskṛta dharmas can act as alambana prataya. The samanantara is the immediately preceding moment of cessation of the cause before the arising of the effect. The adhipati prataya is the indirect influ-

ence which one dharma has over another. It is not merely the dominant condition but the comprehensive and universal cause. Any entity or dharma exerts an influence over all other entities except itself. The adhipati pratyaya is thus wider in scope than all the pratyayas, including the alambana which conditions only mental phenomena. It is a co-present cause. No single entity is held to be the cause of an effect. This is criticised by the Madhyamika in addition to the fact of the cause being different from the effect. God, prakriti, time and chance are not held to be causes.

A cause is so named because an effect depends on it. But as long as the effect is absent it cannot be held to be a cause. On the other hand, the cause cannot have anything present as effect, as a cause of an already present effect would be purposeless. If entities are interdependent and relative as are cause and effect they have no self-existence and they cannot exist as separate entities. What lacks self-existence cannot be a cause and a non-existent thing cannot disappear as it is already a non-entity. Thus an effect can neither have causes nor be without them and conversely, causes neither produce an effect nor are without an effect. Since the Abhidharma assumes non-identity of cause and effect, regarding hetu it may be said, owing to lack of relation between the two, in principle anything might be produced from anything; a pebble might sprout into a plant, otherness to the plant being present in the pebble as well as the seed. As to the alambana as object condition for mental dharmas, the latter are considered entities separate from their objective support or counterpart. If the mental dharma is already present, the object support is superfluous; if the mental dharma is absent there can be no relationship between the two. The samanantara as the cessation of cause immediately precedent to the effect cannot produce an effect because it cannot disappear owing to its inherent lack of self-existence. The adhipati as the general influence of all entities may be defined as "that being, this appears", but if entities are relative they lack real existence, and the for-

mula becomes meaningless. An entity existing by itself in its own nature retains the state and form natural to itself. Being already present it does not depend on other entities. It does not come into being. Consequently, something which has a fixed nature of its own cannot dependently originate. But as dependent origination is postulated this can only apply to entities lacking self-nature which are causally impotent. Accordingly pratitya samutpada is meaningless except in a phenomenal sense.

Reincarnation or rebirth is just one example of pratitya samutpada, and since in Buddhism existence is regarded as made up of unique discrete entities following one another very rapidly with no underlying abiding entity, it is clear that this can only be taken as having truth from an empirical point of view. In fact many Buddhists are reluctant to use the term 'reincarnation' as this implies that there is an abiding entity which continues through a series of lives. 'Rebirth' is however rather taken to imply that the chain of existence is of seeming reality only. This may indeed be true, but how it comes about according to abhidharma theory, for the reasons already given, remains inexplicable. The assertion that there is no abiding entity, if rigorously adhered to, also makes the doctrine of karma unworkable in spite of elaborate attempts to gloss over the need for an enduring life continuum to take responsibility for and experience the results of past karma.

As causality in the Abhidharma view is not self-becoming but requires the co-operation of several factors (pratyayas) in producing an effect, the question arises as to what it is that makes the various factors which by themselves are disconnected entities into relevant causes and conditions? And if some other factor were assumed as bringing about this condition, what is it that makes this factor, too, a cause? This clearly leads to an infinite regress. This difficulty is peculiar to all theories of external causation which take the causes to be several. Buddhism does not accept God or other conscious universal co-ordinating agency. In

none of these four pratyayas can the so-called effect be found. And if it does not exist in them, how can it be produced out of them?

While accepting the traditional Brahmanic view of the saving power of knowledge, there is also the tendency in Buddhism to limit positive knowledge to the minimum and put on one side all questions irrelevant to gaining liberation from dukkha. This check on theoretical speculation is a secret of the vigour and potency of the teaching. The Madhyamika reinforced this tendency.

The concept of a middle path is applicable to religion in general. Here the one extreme is that man can work out his salvation on his own without any help from outside, the other that he can achieve nothing by himself. The position taken varies with the religion and its particular stage of development. In early Buddhism and the Theravada, man is expected to work out his own salvation. It may not be possible to find a complete explanation for the swing of the pendulum in Buddhism, but the destructive dialectic of Nagarjuna and his school must have been influential. The effect of the Shunyavada was to produce an indeterminacy into phenomena and their relationships. For "all things have come into being, not of themselves and not by another and not without a cause." Confidence in the light of human reason to discover ultimate truth was no doubt shaken by this. The pendulum swung almost to the opposite extreme from its original position.

"Just as a man who is blind from birth cannot see the sun, just so are men in the throes of conventional conceptions, they do not perceive the Buddha directly, but wish to detail (prapancayanti) him conceptually. Only by them he cannot be seen directly (aparoksa-vartin), Buddha must be regarded as the Cosmic order (dharma-mata), his Body is the Cosmos (dharma-mata). The essence of the Cosmos is incognisable, it is impossible to know what it is conceptually. The reality of the Buddha is the reality of the Universe, and as far as the Buddha has no separate reality (nihsvabhava), neither has the Universe any apart from him. All the ele-

ments of existence, when sifted through the principle of Relativity (Shunyata), become resplendent. All the millions of existences (bhutakoti) must be regarded as the Body of the Buddha manifested in them. This is Relativity or Shunyata, the climax of Wisdom" (Prajnaparamita).¹

According to this new point of view, liberation cannot be gained by any rational system of knowledge, but only by the saving grace of the Tathagata with his Triple Body, first to become a Bodhisattva and then a Buddha. The necessity is to serve the Buddha in all beings and all places, and to become devoid of self to make room for the Self of selves. This teaching might be summed up as "If I give the Buddha all I am, he will give me all he is."

Ignorance as the motive power behind the process of dependent origination acquires a new and concrete sense. It becomes essentially that kind of ignorance which hides the highest completest truth (Shunyata) by its belief that it is accessible to ordinary knowledge and thought, and by its failure to realise that logical deduction (kalpana) represents a falling-away from Shunyata into duality and suffering.

It must not be thought that the consistent application of Nagarjuna's dialectic to all concepts, relations and things produces a nihilistic attitude. Rather it produces a basic serenity and stability manifesting as a disinterested benevolence accompanied by tolerance and forbearance from opinions and judgments. It might well be termed "apatheia",² a condition free from suffering as being no longer subject to self-centred passions.

It is not a state of apathy or insensitivity but on the contrary the indescribable radiance of Shunya or Prajnaparamita when the clouds of Avidya and Maya are swept away.

The Madhyamika is surely deserving of more consideration than it receives at the present time, representing as it does the maturity of critical analysis. And more than

¹ Buddhist Conception of Nirvana, p. 45.

² Not the insensibility of the Stoics, but disinterested love — passionless passion.

any other system it truly represents a
Middle Path.

This one Reality eternal
Has been revealed by the victorious
Buddha

The lion of mankind :
It is not born, it does not live.
It does not die, does not decay,
And merged in it are all the beings !
If something has no essence in itself,
How can it then receive an essence from
without ?

There are therefore no things internal,
There are also no things external

But everywhere present is our Lord.

This absolute condition of quiescence,

Where every individual disappears,

Has been revealed by the real Buddha,

There is in it no individual life

whatever.

There you will stroll from birth delivered !

You will then be yourself the Saviour,

And you will save the hosts of living beings !

There is no path discernable whatever,

There you will live from birth delivered,

And, free yourself, deliver many

beings !

— Arya-Ratnakara-Sutra,

Buddhist Conception of Nirvana, (p. 180).

THE DANCE

By ALTA YATES

He who dances,
arms lifted in rounding smoothness
against the music of the sky.
He for whom the deep reverberating drum
of silence pulses
For whom the myriad
of small things move,
He waits —

Amid the dark stirrings of lifted fear,
the bittersweet joy of hidden quest,
Turn inward and up
in widening spirals of ascension.

He waits —
Poised within the rhythmic flux
of hot scintillating light,
Wreathed in the white flame
of latent power.
And the cold emptiness
of unlit I
swings in slowing arcs
beneath.

He waits —
A still presence
that dilates
from the engulfing shadow
of immensity
to a bright point,
the minute dancer
that moves as self ;
Waits —
for the sudden leap,
the hollow fall
From crouching fear to full serenity.

THE TIBETAN DOCTRINE OF INCARNATE BUDDHAS

By BODHICHITTA

The Tibetan doctrine of what are commonly called 'Incarnate Buddhas' is a development of the general Mahayana doctrine of Bodhisattvas. A Bodhisattva is one who has overcome the ego but still refrains from waking up into realization of Nirvana in order to help other beings on their journey thereto. Indeed, the full Bodhisattva vow is not to withdraw from samsara till all animate beings have first been saved. Now it is not to be supposed that this can be accomplished in one lifetime; therefore the vow must imply either survival in a disembodied state or continual physical reincarnation.

The former of these two possibilities is widely envisaged in Far Eastern Mahayana. For instance, the practice of invoking the name of Amitabha (Chinese O-Mi-To-Fu) is said to be based on his vow to save all who call upon him and bring them to the 'Western Paradise'. It will be apparent how close this doctrinal development brings Mahayana, both in theory and practice, to theistic religions, whether monotheistic or, since there are a plurality of Bodhisattvas, polytheistic.

In Tibet, the possibility of perpetual return is also developed. A Bodhisattva who has exerted a beneficent influence within a certain limited sphere, for instance in the control of a certain monastery, may return again and again in human form to continue the same work. Despite technical differences, this is fundamentally equivalent to the Hindu doctrine of Avatars and the Christian doctrine of a Son of God.

When Hindus declare that a certain Master is not a saint but an Avatar, what they imply doctrinally is that he is not a man struggling upwards on the path of return who has at last, in this lifetime, made the final break-through to Deliverance but

a Being who has voluntarily descended into human form to help others on their upward path. Therefore he should have no sadhana, no struggle towards Enlightenment, in this lifetime but should simply awaken in childhood or at adolescence into the Enlightenment which he deliberately discarded for his venture into the stormy seas of samsara to rescue those struggling therein. This also explains why Christians attach so much importance to the tenet that Christ was born "without original sin", which means without the obscuration of Enlightenment which normally necessitates spiritual effort. Similarly, those of the Maharshi's followers who regard him as an Avatar (and they are many) maintain that his brief Awakening into Enlightenment at the age of 16¹ was effortless. In parenthesis it may be added that the followers of Ramakrishna have a more difficult case to make in representing him as an Avatar, since they have to explain away the long and violent sadhana he made.

It will be seen then, that there is nothing unique in the Tibetan doctrine of what are known as 'Incarnate Buddhas'. When I referred to technical differences between that and the Hindu doctrine of Avatars, what I had in mind was that as soon as the 'Incarnate Buddha' quits one mortal tene-ment at death he immediately takes birth in another which, as it begins to exercise discrimination, recognizes people and objects from its previous life and recollects occurrences, whereas the Hindu Avatar is not limited either in time or space to the immediate environment of his predecessor or expected to inherit physical memories.

The Hebrew doctrine of return recorded in the Gospel of St. Matthew as being con-

¹ For an account of which see 'Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge', ch. 11, by Arthur Osborne, published by Rider & Co., London.

firmed by Christ is in this respect similar to the Hindu. It will be recalled that when Christ revealed himself to his disciples they protested, somewhat puzzled, that the guardians of the law taught that before the Messiah could appear the Prophet Elias must first return. Jesus confirmed this teaching but added that Elias had indeed come but had not been recognized. "Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist."²

This doctrine of return, in whichever form one may find it, adds complexity to the general doctrine of reincarnation. What is it that continues from one birth to another and what is provided anew each time? Obviously the bodily form is new. But this implies that the temperament and mental aptitudes are also new, in fact the entire psycho-somatic instrument, since both medical science and astrology show that physical, mental and temperamental traits go together. A man cannot have the physical make-up indicated by one horoscope and the temperament indicated by another, the body of Aries and the disposition of Taurus. And in actual fact, the records show that the successive incarnations of the Dalai Lama (the most conspicuous and therefore the best documented case of such chains of incarnation) have differed widely from one another in build and character, physique and temperament.

At the other extreme, it is not sufficient to maintain that what reincarnates is

pure Being or the Self, because that applies to all beings and would leave no difference between a reincarnation of one Bodhisattva and another or of Krishna or Rama, or of Moses or Elias—or indeed between them and any other form assumed by the One Self.

This implies the existence of beings that are not individualised by the ignorance born of desire, as are mortal men, but at the same time are not universalized in Oneness with the Self, that is in Nirvana. There is indeed evidence of such on earth in a human state. Those who knew the Maharshi in his lifetime were quite convinced that he was in a state of constant conscious Identity with the Self; and yet they did differentiate between him and other such conscious manifestations of Identity—Shankara, say, or Christ or Buddha. If this separateness in Identity can exist with a body, why not without? The Maharshi was quite categorical that there is nothing beyond the state of Jivan-Mukta, Realized while embodied, nothing more to attain, no difference between the Jivan-Mukta and the Videha-Mukta, Realized after death. What more could he possibly attain by death, when Identity is realized already? And what could he lose? Only physical modes of apprehension; and these are already felt to be a restriction. So if we can conceive of such a being embodied, why not dis-embodied? Then why not re-embodied?

² *St. Matthew*, XVII, 10-13.

Whatever could be done from the pseudo-centre of a "self"?

What can not be done from the ubiquitous centre of total self-absence that is no-where?

From where there is no doing, no doing is needed; from where there is nothing, no thing arises, but everything is. — WEI WU WEI.

AN INCARNATE ABBOT EXPLAINS

From a speech by Trungpa Trulku Rinpoche given at Roselaleham.

After the death of the previous Abbot of Surmang, my monastery, the monks sent a deputation to His Holiness Gyalwa Karmapa, the head of our particular school of Tibetan Buddhism, asking him whether he could tell them where their Abbot had taken birth again, so that they could bring him back among them. Gyalwa Karmapa spent several days in meditation, and finally gave them the answer that their Abbot was a young child living in the village of Geje, in a house facing south; that the family had two children and a brown dog. After some difficulty the monks found the house and the young child, who was myself.

I am told that as the monks came in and presented me with the traditional white scarf, I behaved in exactly the right manner, although I had never been taught how. Also that I recognised various objects that had been the possessions of my predecessor, shown to me among others of the same kind. Eventually they were convinced that I was the eleventh Abbot Trungpa and they brought me back to Surmang.

Shortly after that I was formally enthroned as Abbot, though of course, all my duties were performed by an elder monk acting as regent. I was put into the charge of a tutor, and continued to see my parents from time to time. I began learning about religion from my tutor, who told me about the life of Gautama the Buddha and about his teachings. At the age of eight I began my first simple meditation.

From then on I learned more and more about the various meditations of our school. I received instruction from two of the great Gurus or Teachers of Eastern Tibet. One of them, Chentse Rinpoche, is now in India and is still my Guru. Sometimes I lived in the monastery and sometimes away from it, in retreat. Every monk of our school

spends several years in solitary meditation during that time living, sleeping and eating in one small room. Meditation is really the heart of a monk's life, for in it he discovers and experiences the actual truth of the teachings he has before known only intellectually.

I do not want to speak about the particular techniques of meditation. There are many and they are adapted to suit the needs of all kinds of individuals. I want rather to speak about the reasons for meditation and its essence, for meditation is not necessarily a matter of sitting cross-legged and motionless for long periods of time, it is something that may be practised, consciously or unconsciously by anyone at any time.

You will be able to draw parallels to what I shall say both from the beliefs and practices of other religions and from your own experiences. We are all human beings, and our existences present similar problems and similar possibilities. As Milarepa, the great sage and poet of Tibet, sang from the tops of the mountains,

'I am the goal of every great meditator,
I am the meeting place of the faithful,
I am the coil of birth, death and decay.'

But to begin at the beginning, each one of us may be struck at one time or another by the inadequacy of our way of experiencing the world. We feel that something is missing, that our attempts to explain and to organise our lives and to provide ourselves with an emotional security are doomed to failure, and are indeed in themselves contradictory to the nature of things; that in our simply fulfilling our own desires we are cheating the Universe.

Meditation is the attempt to remove those aspects of our natures in which our awareness of life is limited and confined, and to

experience a new depth. Upon what does our everyday picture of the world depend? It depends not upon things themselves but on our reactions to them. We project outwards on things our own hopes and prejudices, and order our separate world accordingly. Meditation is a gradual loss of these private worlds, and realisation that our true natures lie hidden in the heart of the Universe.

It is one of the fundamental teachings of Buddhism that things in themselves are without substance. They are all, like flowers, springing up suddenly out of nothingness and again withering. The world of things, or the appearance of things, is a kind of puppet show, a masquerade; in itself it possesses a kind of demonic energy, but it can give no lasting satisfaction to the heart. In meditation we begin to cross the threshold between appearance and reality.

Many of us will have thought like this, but will also have experienced how difficult this threshold is to cross. All unconsciously, the world of appearances exercises a certain fascination. Everything in its appearances releases a small charge of energy, and our ignorant minds, feeling dissatisfaction with their existing states, leap to swallow this charge. Thereafter, the imprint of the object remains fixed in the memory, as, if the experience was in some way pleasurable, the mind desires a repetition of it; if it was unpleasant, the mind will reject any repetition of it, and a negative force is set up.

Meditation consists in seeing the world for precisely what it is; this can be done only when one remains quite unaffected by hatred or desire. One observes dispassionately one's reactions to things, and gradually the passions of greed and hatred are driven out of one's system. Instead of reaching out after one thing and another, one becomes calmer and more self-possessed; one uses the strength thus released to eliminate, gradually, distracted and discursive thoughts as they arise, and brings oneself into a state of clear, one-pointed awareness. One begins to experience greater freedom, and to find room to move about in, one no

longer heeds one's hopes and fears, and one lets go the burden of them. Becoming nothing, one becomes everything, and suddenly it may happen that one is left for a moment still, and before one is infinite space and through one, and around one, the reality flows unobstructed. As Milarepa says,

'As happy as the current of a great river,
So is the sage who enjoys the stream of
thought.'

This is possible for everyone, but clearly it requires certain qualities in us, and it requires time to come to fruition.

We need first of all to have clearly in our minds what we are trying to do. Our basic assumptions influence us far more than we realise, and we must become thoroughly steeped in the ideas and the attitudes of the spiritual life before we can begin. I had to memorise a large portion of our scriptures and repeat them by heart to my tutor.

As well as study, we need determination and integrity. Each one stands before the threshold of eternity, alone with himself. He cannot rely on any created thing. Each one of us can forge a true vessel only out of himself; others may help us, but in the end it is we alone who are responsible. Gradually we have to realise the agony of our mistakes, our failure to understand, and we have to have the courage to come out of prison.

Then, beyond this solitude, one thing else is needed. Just as everything in the world of appearance releases a charge of energy, so also does everything in eternity. That energy, indeed, is far stronger because it has been purified of the stain of greed, hatred and material illusion. The thought is not a thought of anything, it is a thought which in itself is pure energy, passing into and through everything unobstructed. So when we purify our minds, a force is built up from which each one of us can draw, and in the light of which each one can examine himself. In the monasteries and hermitages of Tibet, I could feel this strength in operation, and it was something of which we were all part. If I may be allowed to say so, I

feel this atmosphere lacking in the cities and together, we may join in making a spirit the
 even in many churches of this country. But some may call new and some may call old
 I hope very much that during our time here but which in itself abides for ever.

— By Courtesy : *The Layman*

VERSES FROM SRI MURUGANAR

Translated By PROF. K. SWAMINATHAN

(63)

Without the body, the world is not.
 Without mind, the body is not.
 Without knowledge, mind is not.
 And without being, knowledge there is none.

(64)

To meet the needs of various minds
 The Master spoke of various doctrines.
Ajāta is the only doctrine
 He taught as from his own experience.
 (Ajāta = No birth)

(141)

The truth they know not who assert
 That power and peace are poles apart.
 Peace attained by inward search
 Is what the world beholds as power.

(260)

Do not spread out the mind inquiring
 "Who may you be?" and "who he?"
 Turn it inward questing
 Steadily, keenly, "Who am I?"

(279)

Birds in the sky and fish in water
 Dart and leave no track behind.
 And none can trace the path by which
 The sages journeyed to the Self.

(283)

Who in the golden temple of awareness
 Instals Siva, the form of pure awareness,
 And offers him the worship of awareness.
 His awareness is the Truth supreme.

(296)

Awareness is non-attachment,
 Awareness purity;
 Awareness is propinquity to God;
 Immortality; freedom from fear;
 Awareness is
 Everything and all there is.

AN INTRODUCTION TO JAPJI

By Lt. Col. KARAMCHANDANI

Guru Nanak Sahib, the founder of Sikh religion was born in 1469 A.D., in the village of Talvandi, (now called Nanakana Sahib) in what is now W. Pakistan. It is not the intention of this introduction to go into the merits of the religion which Guru Sahib founded. All that I wish to say is that he was a householder who at the age of about 30 years renounced the world and went all over India and the neighbouring parts of the world, like Arabia, Central Asia, Egypt etc., and propounded his cult. When this mission was over he went back again and settled in Nanakana Sahib in about 1529 A.D. as a householder. He had a wife and two children ; but the honour of Guruship descended on a disciple Bhai Lahna by name, who became the second Guru, Angad. The Gadi passed by merit to Bhai Lahna, who was chosen by Guru Nanak in 1539 A.D. Just before his death Guru Sahib showed that it was not necessary for the disciple to receive initiation in the orthodox manner, although he did stress the need of a Guru and his upadesa.

His Japji which is the bible of the Sikhs and which every devout Sikh reads daily, emphasises the two aspects of religion, the horizontal, which produces a harmonious way of life, and the vertical which produces saints. The horizontal is the ethical aspect which covers the first 7 Pauris and equips the mind to fly on the track of gnosis. The 19 Pauris take the seeker into realms of reality through stations of Sravana (listening), Manana (meditation) Nididhyasana (absorption), and Tat tvam asi (That thou art) — the aphorism of Samaveda.

The spirit bloweth where it listeth and let him catch it who will. Guru Sahib's urge is preaching self-enquiry while living the life of a householder with love in heart and mantram in mind. The practical disciplines of feeding the lower into the higher prin-

ciple, that is, objects of senses (rajasic activity) into the fire of senses (sattvic activity) in the like kirtan (music), literature, creative art etc., which Lord Krishna calls yajna (Gita IV : 32, 37), but which Guru Sahib calls tap tao (Japji XXXVIII) are preliminary steps on the vital ladder.

Again Guru Sahib's truths are clothed in a celestial type of rhythm, so that the whole Guru Grant Sahib can be sung, is an epical marvel of creative art and literature. Guru Sahib's ideas on reincarnation are spiritual secrets so manifestly laid bare that I would like here to quote what he says in Pauri XX of Japji. "Just as our foot collects dust and dirt by walking through dusty and muddy fields, so also the mind accumulates samskaric dust and dirt by peripatetic wanderings through development of consciousness in the course of evolution from past lives. This dust is in the form of sinful life of the senses, a by-product of the separative ego, covered by desires. And just as earthly dirt covering the feet can be washed away with water, so the sanskaric dust covering the mind can be washed away by devotional chanting of the name of the Lord."

Guru Sahib stresses that it is you alone who are responsible for your actions. and you cannot blame God. As you sow, so do you reap. If you sow to the flesh you reap corruption, if you sow to the spirit, you reap life everlasting. Therefore it is always you. By your thoughts and actions of today you are determining your Karma of tomorrow. By your sowing today you are determining your reaping of tomorrow. Thus if you do not obey rules of health and fall ill, do not blame God ; if you disobey rules of traffic and meet with an accident do not blame God, and if you disobey rules of scripture and lose inner peace do not blame God. God's grace is as free as the sun's rays. If

you pull down the shade and do not feel or see the sun, it is your action not God's. God's grace is always there available and if you do not get it, it is because you have cut yourself off from it. He winds up this Pauri XX as follows: "And the result is that what is sown is reaped. Nanak sayeth that this keeps the Divine Law operating, and the Time-spirit bearing stream of happenings, death, birth and death—the infinite perigrination." (vide Japji P. 48 essayed by the Author, reviewed in **The Mountain Path** of October 1964).

Re-emphasised in Pauri XXXIV. Guru Sahib's views about reincarnation give a pointer to the doctrine of Karma. i.e. man evolves exactly according to his actions—the process being unbroken by death and passing into the next life. What strikes one as most patent is his thesis, that inevitably every sin, whether of omission or commission, brings forth punishment. It has nothing to do with God, because God is too pure to behold inequity. Punishment or reward has

to do with the law of cause and effect—karmic law. We set in motion that which comes to us. If we sow to the flesh it comes in the form of corruption, if we sow to the spirit it comes back to us in the form of life everlasting. It is a feed-back system like cybernetics. It is we who do it, not God. If we put into the machine an inferior kind of cloth, the clothing will also be of an inferior kind, if we use inferior leather, the finished boots will also be of an inferior kind. Therefore set not in motion today what will return to you with evil consequences tomorrow, because while you are living the human life you are setting into motion the law of cause and effect. This is what Guru Sahib means when he says "these various natures and colours (bodies of men) are determined by their respective actions—good and bad. So far as God is concerned He is True and so is His court True [vide Japji, p. 93, Pauri XXXIV, and p. 15, (Pauri IV) essayed by the author, reviewed in **The Mountain Path** of Oct. 1964]

A man asked the Maharshi to say something to him. When asked what he wanted to know, he said that he knew nothing and wanted to hear something from the Maharshi.

Maharshi: You know that you know nothing. Find out that knowledge. That is liberation (**Mukti**).

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The One Eternal Reality exists everywhere; how then can there be any idea of unity with it or separation from it?

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— Avadhuta Gita, VII, 7.

The soul in all the various forms of life is One Soul, an omnipresent Identity. — PLOTINUS.

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The now-moment in which God made the first man, and the now-moment in which the last man will disappear, and the now-moment in which I am speaking are all one in God, in whom there is only one now. — ECKHART.

A CHRISTIAN VIEW OF REINCARNATION†

By SAGITTARIUS

The question that concerns Christians with regard to reincarnation is : if it is true why didn't Christ teach it ? It can be parried by the counter-question ; if he didn't why did some of his early followers believe that he did ?

A Spiritual Master is apt to be an intensely practical man. He is on earth to do a job : to lead men from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light, from death to Immortality, as the Upanishad puts it. Not only is elaborate doctrinal theory not essential for this, but it can be an actual distraction. Argument about theory is a facile alternative to spiritual effort, and by it one can sidetrack both oneself and others. It was Buddha who flatly refused to answer theoretical questions on the ground that they would not help one to escape from suffering to Enlightenment — and what mountains of subtle dialectic his followers have piled up ! Christ was equally reticent — and how many of his followers have killed or imprisoned one another over points of theory that he kept silent upon and therefore obviously did not consider important. People who knew the Maharshi personally report that he too was averse to answering questions of sterile theory. I hope **The Mountain Path** will not degenerate into a forum for academic discussions of his doctrine.¹

Returning to the question of Christ : he threw out hints enough for those of his followers who could understand the ultimate truth of Identity — bidding them be perfect as God is perfect, telling them that only he who lays down his life will find it, telling them that the kingdom of heaven was within them — others in plenty. But for those who could only understand heaven and hell he said little — that there were many depart-

ments in heaven, that there would be pain and lamentation in hell ; very little, but, how much the theologians have spun out of it !

Christ never affirmed reincarnation but he also never denied it ; so if it was implicitly assumed by the Jews of his day his not denying it is tantamount to acceptance. And there are signs that it was. To quote from an old book, 'Lux Orientalis' by Joseph Glanvill : "Few speculative truths are delivered in Scripture but such as were called forth by the controversies of those times ; and pre-existence was none of them, it being the constant opinion of the Jews, as appears by that question, "Master, was it for this man's sin or his father's that he was born blind ?" ... for except they supposed that he might have sinned before he was born, the question had been senseless and impertinent. Again when Christ asked them whom men said he was they answered that some said John the Baptist, others Elias, others Jeremias or one of the Prophets,³ which sayings of theirs suppose their belief of a metempsychosis and consequently of pre-existence. There, one would think, were very proper occasions for our Saviour to have rectified his mistaken followers had their supposition been an error."

Perhaps the idea has spread since Eastern doctrines began to be more widely known in the West that acceptance of their doctrine of reincarnation would mean rejection of the traditional Christian teaching of heaven and hell, but that is not so. Hinduism and Buddhism also teach heaven and hell.

Their teaching is that, so far as there is an individual being (and individual being is

¹ Not as long as the present editorship continues. — (Ed.)

² St. John, IX, 1-4.

³ St. Matthew, XVI, 13-14.

no less real after death than before, but also no more) it reaps the harvest it has sown on earth in a state of heaven or hell and then, having done so, returns again to a new life on earth to build up new karma. There is no need to go farther afield than **The Mountain Path** to substantiate this statement, since it is clearly indicated in the article by the Dalai Lama on Tibetan Buddhism in the issue of April 1964.

Now suppose this is true? It seems a more likely supposition than that it is not true. Why didn't Christ also teach it? Why should he? For those who could understand the essential doctrine of Identity it was not necessary. For those who could not he taught as much as was needed: that there would be a reckoning after this life. So far as hope and fear can be an incentive that was enough to know. Those of real understanding did not need it anyway; those who did need it would be no better off for knowing what comes later on: they would only have more to wrangle about.

Some Christians, it is true, say that the Christian belief in heaven and hell is different and cannot admit of subsequent rebirth, since it implies eternal heaven and hell. It is painful to have to argue about this because the very assertion of it shows such a dismal lack of understanding; also because it does not help at all on one's spiritual pilgrimage. But having undertaken

to write for a journal one cannot always extricate oneself from barren theory.

Instead of arguing, let us simply examine what this belief implies. That innumerable beings exist outside God. That God, therefore, is not Infinite, being limited by the exclusion of them. That they are eternal with regard to the future but not with regard to the past, since God made them but made them immortal. (And surely it flies in the face of both reason and experience that anything should have a beginning but not an end!) And that this God, dwelling among the innumerable other beings, everlastingly rejoices some of them and torments others — and everlastingly does not mean for a million years, but everlastingly in an eternity in which a million years are no more than a snap of the fingers, without hope, without possibility of reparation, with no relief ever, endlessly, endlessly — on account of their use or misuse of opportunities during their microscopic span of earth-life. Is it necessary to say more?

Far better to emulate Christ in not discussing such matters. Those who have ears to hear, as he put it, will leave aside argument and devote their lives to the struggle to be perfect as their Father in heaven (which is within them) is perfect. For those who have not, Christ said all that was necessary when he told them that there would be a reckoning. Dialogue and discussion will not save them from it.

The one Inner Self of all beings shapes itself into form after form and is also outside them. — **Kathopanishad, II, 2-10.**

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"There is only one consciousness, which subsists in the waking, dream and sleep states. In sleep there is no 'I'. The 'I'-thought arises on waking and then the world appears. Where was this 'I' in deep sleep? Was it there or was it not? It must have been there also, but not in the way that you feel now. The present is only the 'I'-thought, whereas the sleeping 'I' is the real 'I'. It subsists all through. It is consciousness." — **SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.**

TRACES OF REINCARNATION IN THE WEST

By H. SEBASTIAN GUBBINS

Reincarnation is commonly thought of as an Eastern doctrine, but it is by no means exclusively so. It was probably not the accepted belief of the common man in Western antiquity, as it is in Eastern countries, but it was the tradition of the philosophers from Pythagoras to Plato and, through him, to Plotinus and the Gnostics and neo-Platonists.

Pythagoras is recorded not merely to have believed in reincarnation but to have known several of his previous incarnations and those of his companions. Diogenes Laertius declares in his life of him: "He was the first, they say, to declare that the soul, bound now in this creature, now in that, thus goes on a round ordained of necessity." Actually, he may have been the first among the recorded philosophers but the doctrine was already current in the Orphic cult that prevailed before his time. Plato postulates it quite unequivocally: "Know that if you become worse you will go to the worse souls, or if better to the better; and in every succession of life and death you will do and suffer what like may fitly suffer at the hands of like."¹

The neo-Platonic mystic Plotinus formulates the doctrine quite explicitly. "It is a dogma recognized throughout antiquity that the soul expiates its sins in the darkness of the infernal regions, and that afterwards it passes into new bodies, there to undergo new trials. When we have gone astray in multiplicity, we are first punished by our wandering away from the path, and afterwards by less favourable conditions when we take on new bodies. The gods are ever looking down upon us in this world. No reproach we bring against them can be justifiable, for their providence is never-ending; they allot to each individual his appropriate destiny, and that is in harmony

with his past conduct, in conformity with his successive existences."² It will be seen from the above that not only does he affirm the doctrine but maintains that it was recognized throughout antiquity. Moreover, both he and Plato speak of it as the impersonal, inevitable justice of the law of cause and effect, equivalent to the Hindu law of karma. Although he refers to "the gods", he is describing an impersonal process in which, as he says, each individual receives his appropriate destiny in harmony with his past conduct.

The Hebrew neo-Platonist Philo in the great philosophical metropolis of Alexandria not merely postulated reincarnation but recognized, as do the Upanishads and the Gita, that it is only the lower path, for those who fail to take the higher path of return to Oneness. "The company of disembodied souls is distributed in various orders. The law of some of them is to enter mortal bodies and after certain prescribed periods to be again set free. But those possessed of a diviner structure are absolved from all local bonds of earth."

In classical Rome the doctrine was proclaimed by the poets (many of whom were under direct or indirect Pythagorean influence). Aeneas in Virgil's "Aeneid"³ is shown the souls of the dead and told that, after drinking from Lethe, the river of forgetfulness, they will return again to earthly bodies with new courage and enterprise, forgetful of their former frustrations. Ovid's "Metamorphoses" are largely on this theme. "The soul wanders about, coming from one place to another and assuming any body. It passes from animal to human bodies and also from men to animals, but no expanse

¹ "Laws", Book I.

² Second Ennead.

³ Book VI.

of time destroys it. And as pliable wax is it molded into new forms, no longer remaining as it was before or keeping the same shape, and yet still the same wax ; so, I tell you, is the soul ever the same though passing into new forms."

As I have said, it was not the universal belief of the common people, but it was of another people of Western antiquity, that is of the Celts. They probably did not preserve their traditions in writing, and most of what they did write has perished, but Roman observers have recorded this belief among them. For instance, Caesar tells us about the Druids : "As one of their chief dogmas, they teach this, that souls are not annihilated but pass after death from one body to another ; and they hold that by this teaching men are much encouraged to valour, through disregarding the fear of death."

One can imagine the Druids smiling at this simple utilitarian appraisal by a Roman observer. Some vestiges of the doctrine continued in Celtic mythology, and it is interesting to find echoes of it in the modern poet W. B. Yeats, who steeped himself in the old legends :

I see myself go drifting like a river
From change to change ; I have been
many things —
A green drop in the surge, a gleam of
light
Upon a sword, a fir-tree on a hill,
An old slave grinding at a heavy quern,
A king sitting upon a chair of gold —
And all these things were wonderful
and great,
But now I have grown nothing,
knowing all.

Here again, as in Philo of Alexandria, is the recognition that karma can be transcended. Nothingness, which is the same as universality, absorbs and nullifies the succession of separate forms.

However, the indigenous traditions of the West were overlayed and largely replaced by Semitic traditions, so it becomes interesting to see whether reincarnation has any

place in these. The answer is not as conclusively negative as might be expected. Certainly the doctrine was not theoretically formulated in Judaeism, but then no doctrine was. It was a practical, not a doctrinal or philosophical religion. There are signs, however, that reincarnation was tacitly assumed, at least by those with a doctrinal turn of mind. "The Wisdom of Solomon", a book which is accepted as canonical in the Roman Catholic version of the Bible, though not in the Anglican, contains the statement : "Now I was a good child by nature, and a good soul fell to my lot. Nay, rather, being good, I came into a body undefiled."⁴ What is this but reincarnation according to the law of karma ?

Similarly, Christ's disciples seem to have taken reincarnation for granted, though without ever formulating it. For instance, on one occasion, when Christ gave sight to a man who had been blind from birth, they pertinently asked whether it was in punishment for the man's own sins or those of his parents that he had been born blind.⁵ They obviously did not mean his sins in this life, since the affliction had been on him from birth ; therefore they could only have been referring to his sins in a previous life. That is to say, they were tacitly assuming that a man's sins in one life would be punished by an afflicted birth in the next, which is the doctrine of karma and reincarnation. It is true that Christ repudiated both suggestions, saying instead that the man had been born blind so that Christ could have an opportunity to work a miracle on him ("that the works of God should be made manifest in him") but he did not decry the query about punishment of the man's own previous sins as impossible or heretical, as he might have been expected to had it been so. He merely said that it did not apply in this case.

On another occasion, when Christ announced himself to his disciples as the Messiah, they replied, legitimately puzzled, that they had been taught to believe that the Prophet

⁴ VIII, 19-20.

⁵ St. John, IX, 1-4.

Elias must first be reborn before the Messiah could come ; and Christ replied that Elias had indeed been reborn but people had not recognized him. "Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist." In other words that John the Baptist had been an unrecognized reincarnation of the Prophet Elias.⁶ This indicates that some measure of reincarnation — at least the return of some of the Prophets — was regular teaching among the Rabbis of Christ's time.

With the rise of Christianity the formulation of doctrine became a passion and beliefs were no longer left implicit. No wonder, then, that some of the early Christians postulated reincarnation, while others denied it. One of the most prominent of its advocates was Origen. "Is it not rational that souls should be introduced into bodies in accordance with their merits and previous deeds, and that those who have used their bodies in doing the utmost possible good should have a right to bodies endowed with qualities superior to the bodies of others?"⁷ This doctrine came to be ignored or repudiated in later Christianity, but was it ever formally repudiated? Here again, the answer is less clear than might be expected. It was indeed repudiated and anathematised at the Second Council of Constantinople in 533 A.D., but this was a shamefully packed Council convoked by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian, at which the Western Church was almost unrepresented, and which the Pope protested against and boycotted. Can the resolutions of such a Council be held valid?

Be that as it may, the doctrine of reincarnation certainly did drop out in Christendom and ceased to be generally taught or accepted, although a long succession of poets and philosophers have continued personally to proclaim it. In modern times their number has been swelled enormously by those, such as Schopenhauer, who have drawn their wisdom from India, and the doctrine has come to be thought of as purely Eastern. In fact, it is one of the many treasures which the West has had and lost.

I will conclude this article by pointing out one curious traditional survival of it in the West : that is in Western astrology. The various planets all move at different speeds, like the hands of a clock. Therefore an aspect or angle between two planets will be getting more and more exact up to the point of exactness and then less and less so, just as a time such as a quarter to twelve or a quarter past twelve will be getting more and more exact as the minute hand approaches 11-45 or 12-15 and then less and less exact as it gets beyond it. The former type of aspect is termed "applying" and the latter "separating"; and it is a common belief among astrologers that a separating aspect applies to some development that was achieved (for good or ill) in the previous life and is now an acquired asset or liability, and an applying aspect to something that has to be actualised in this lifetime.

⁶ St. Matthew, XVII, 10-13.

⁷ "Contra Celsium".

Question : Can destiny (Karma) ever come to an end?

Maharshi : The Karmas carry the seeds of their own destruction in themselves.

THE HERO OF MYTHOLOGY

By SIR GEORGE TREVELYAN

The Hero of mythology and allegory is a figure who stands for something quite special in human development. To understand him we must appreciate that the inner core of man is an eternal being belonging to the timeless world and descending to the world of matter in order to break through its deceptions and make good his path of return. The hero is one who undertakes this goal consciously and makes it the deliberate purpose of his life. His decision to do so brings upon him trials and ordeals, turning his life into an allegorical journey the end and purpose of which is discovery of and union with his own higher Self symbolised by marriage with his Lady (Penelope, Ariadne, Portia, Rosalind). Every great myth is concerned with this timeless theme. It is the eternal allegory and any soul at any time or place can choose to set forth upon the quest, knowing that the decision will call down ordeals and tribulations upon him. The goal of every hero is the same, however variously symbolised, as Golden Fleece or Sangraal, lost heritage or Beloved: the mountain has only one peak. The trials will vary according to the needs of each life: the mountain path can begin from any point around its base. The path of regeneration is always a heroic way even if the setting of life is humble. The essential thing is to recognize the existence of the Higher Self with which each one of us must sooner or later unite, no matter after how many births. But 'only the brave deserve the fair'; the hero is he who is prepared to waste no more lifetimes but sets forth deliberately and valiantly in his very life to achieve the Supreme Goal. Our civilization has forgotten the existence of the Goal and therefore lost the true concept of the hero and his task.

We need to remember Plato's view that true education of the adult demands "the

habitual vision of greatness". I will quote here a verse from Yeats's 'Sailing to Byzantium' which gives the real inspiration for our later years:

An aged man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing

For every tatter in its mortal dress,
Nor is there singing school but studying
Monuments of its own magnificence;
And therefore have I sailed the seas
and come

To the holy city of Byzantium.

Byzantium for Yeats represents the realm of higher knowledge and intuition, and the voyage to it is the quest for attainment.

Fuller understanding comes if we grasp the idea of repeated earth lives. When, after the death of the body, we move into a realm of expanded consciousness, we shall have a vision of the life we have led. The soul will then experience how it has fallen short of what it should have achieved, how it has hurt others and by its selfishness has done harm and thereby hindered its own possibilities of growth. An inner impulse is thus implanted in it to set right the wrong and harm for which it is responsible. This will be impressed into the soul as a trait of character, an urge to overcome the flaw in the personality. Before descending again to earth it will be shown its task and urged to 'remember'. In the obscurity of earth it will forget, but the trait of character will, out of a subconscious drive, draw the person into situations of suffering and temptation where the flaw can be mended. In this sense the sorrows and calamities of our life, with the people and events who are involved in them, will be seen to be brought upon us by our own inner planning.

But there is more to it than this. If on a higher level we plan our ordeals and trials it follows that there must also be implanted in the soul the power necessary to overcome them. This is axiomatic and to recognize it is most essential. Our sufferings and trials are not the meaningless blows of chance but a destiny planned and directed by our own higher selves for our essential character-therapy. As we face each trial in the allegorical journey through dark forest or perilous sea we are given strength to overcome it, tapping springs of eternal power. The power may not be apparent until facing the ordeal. Our conscious mind will be unaware of it, but if we can react with joy and affirmation to a trial the power will be forthcoming, as by magic. This is co-operation with a higher world. It is a technique of 'heroic' action. To quote Hopkins: "I did say Yes to lightning and lashed rod". If we do not grasp the deeper meaning of the soul's trials we may indeed fall into despair and imagine that all is meaningless hardship, "A tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing," as Macbeth found it after his failure. For to say that the strength to overcome is implanted in us does not mean that every one must overcome. There are many who fail on the quest — heroes who are vanquished, weaklings who are daunted by perils they might have overcome. He who achieves is indeed a hero. He learns to say 'Yes' in positive and courageous reaction to opportunities offered where before he might have held back in timidity. It is a way of valour and joy, adventure and exploration into the unknown. Every myth, every fairy story, most great drama and all epic poetry is concerned with the symbol of the 'hero'. The myths speak to us in symbolic form of timeless truths intensely relevant to our life, far more so than any of the academic philosophies we elaborate.

Shakespeare's plays, if we look at their hidden allegory, all reveal the same truths. All the old plays are concerned with kings and princes. The heroes are all noble. This is because all old drama is concerned on the allegorical level with man falling from his

divine origin and seeking to return, like the prodigal son, to the world from which he had fallen. His essential royalty and nobility is symbolised outwardly. Each one of us is called upon to become royal within ourselves. The temple is our own body into which the Spirit can descend. The kingdom which we are called upon to rule is that of our own life. The true nobility is of those who have consciously set forth upon the mountain path.

Let us look briefly at the tragedy of Hamlet as the hero who failed. But let it be clear that this is only one of many possible interpretations. A symbol can have manifold different meanings. If for you it holds some life-enhancing significance who can say that your interpretation is wrong, even if it is different from that held by some one else. He is a highly self-conscious intellectual summoned to undertake the path of regeneration. His task is to take over a kingdom occupied by a usurping monarch and thereby revenge his father and free his mother from domination by the usurper. Seen allegorically, the kingdom is himself. "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark" — in himself. The false, unaspiring aspect of the personality rules, wedded to his mother, that is to the instinctual nature which is debased and calls for regeneration. In interpreting a myth we must see the whole setting as the personality and all the characters as themes or aspects of it. The temptations and trials reflect the flaws of character to be overcome. Hamlet, a university intellectual, is summoned by an exalted being from the other world. His noble father's spirit in arms (that is his earlier untutored spiritual intuition that was once wedded to his instinctual life before he fell into sophistication) tells him of his warrior task to avenge the murder and redeem his debased mother. Hamlet was 30, that turning point when a man so often begins to see the meaning of life. In an overwhelming flash of vision he sees what he has to do, what is the purpose of life for him, he sees before him the hero's path of self-regeneration. The ghost calls on him to "Remember me!" He cries:

RENEWED OPPORTUNITY

By CORNELIA BAGAROTTI

Behind the hidden fact of Reincarnation lies the secret of renewed opportunity. A given life on earth which in the eyes of history seems to have been one of misuse, selfishness, even of betrayal of the Spirit can in subsequent lives reveal a reversal which then converts this same individual into a being of supreme dedication and spiritual service to humanity. It is a deeply sacred thought.

For who, in our time, has not met both in individuals and in the crises and events of our epoch men of supreme almost satanic selfishness. Yet it would be wiser to recognise the evil exactly for what it is — mis-used power.

Intelligence, strength, talents, capacity for concentrated work, one-pointed powers of will and ambition are FORCES which are being used for materialistic and selfish purposes alone. They are ignoring the right evolution of Humanity and are contemptuous of God and the Divine inherent in all creation. Were these forces once placed consciously in the unselfish service of humanity their strength would be incalculable.

History has recorded such personalities. Cain and Judas are two examples, and Saul who made the reversal in one lifetime into St. Paul of the Gospels. Ponder the significance of the two mothers, one of St. Francis, the other of St. Augustine. Both women, whose deep piety and hope for their sons may have been the very presence these strong men needed to help them dedicate their lives. In a similar sense all who hold faith and love for their fellowman in a period of darkest unselfishness and materialism act as spiritual mothers to humanity. Their devoted love may well prove the inspiration which illumines incarnations to come. None can estimate the greatness of future lives once this reversal from the self-centered ego to the awareness of the Divine Whole of creation has been consciously

undertaken. Too often the life of the Spirit is wrongly considered as a private concern. Whereas, when all mankind is one, nothing which concerns a fragment of that unity is separate from the whole. In this sense the illumination of the individual acts as a partial lifting or awakening of the whole. Or in the words of the Christ they become the leaven which leavens the lump.

When Reincarnation is fully understood it will then be viewed not merely as a teaching of repeated earth lives or the working out of destiny and self-created karma for man's evolution and gradual perfection but in a far deeper sense men will be grateful for the renewal of opportunity which lies behind reincarnation. Particularly for this opportunity to perfect himself into the image of God, for the opportunity to review after death his entire life as judged from eternal values not the values of one egoistical, separate individual entity, and for the opportunity to bring with him into the next incarnation forces that can create a reversal and in subsequent lives one-pointed spiritual living as his contribution to God.

We have had in our time the recent death of one such consciously dedicated man. Albert Schweitzer. His life indicates the human potential. All over the earth other souls of similar or superior stature live and work, often totally unknown and acting as a hidden leaven. Some are teachers, some leaders in social or philanthropic work, some educators or artists in different fields, some writers, some scientists, some in politics, some in ashrams and monasteries, some in industry or business and some in private life. Each is making his hidden contribution after many lives of preparation for his task. Not all of these are openly in evangelical life. Once even these illumined souls stood on earth subject to the temptations of free will and the ego and ignorant of the true

inner meaning of life. For each of these in some life came the moment of questioning, of struggle, or suffering, or examination and remorse. Then finally at last the inner alliance to the eternal.

When one fully comprehends this then the ability to forgive, to pardon, to understand, to be patient, which all the great

spiritual teachers have shown is more fully comprehended. It is this faith in the right evolution of humanity, in the adjustment of wrong acting or living or thinking that Reincarnation provides. As one thinker said : "It is not atonement, it is at-one-ment". When Man realises he is at one with God and all is God then he has made his reversal.

STRANGE CASE OF THE POLLOCK TWINS

By KENNETH BRASS

Two young girls in England have just faced a scientific attempt to prove they have returned from the dead.

An Indian professor, conducting research on reincarnation, made a 7,000-mile trip to Britain after reading about the girls in an Australian newspaper.

He is convinced that twins Jennifer and Gillian Pollock, aged seven, of Whitley Bay, Northumberland, can help solve the riddle of rebirth and communication with the dead, and he tells me that he may soon visit Australia to seek "more examples of reincarnation."

He is Dr. Hemendra Bannerjee, 38, director of the Department of Parapsychology at Rajasthan University in Jaipur. (whose investigations concerning the rebirth of a girl in Saurashtra were reported in *The Sunday Standard* a few weeks ago.)

The girls' father, Mr. John Pollock, a 45-year-old sales supervisor, thinks they are reincarnations of his daughters, Joanna, eleven, and Jacqueline, six, who were killed by a car as they skipped hand-in-hand to Sunday school in 1957.

The twins, born 17 months after the accident, closely resemble Joanna and Jacqueline, but, most significant of all, they have similar birthmarks and can recall almost perfectly the circumstances of their sisters' deaths.

Gillian has a coin-sized birthmark on her hip, identical in colour, size and position to one Jacqueline had.

Jennifer has an inch-and-a-half forehead scar identical to one Joanna had, yet Jennifer has never been in an accident that could have caused it.

During his long interview with the girls, Dr. Bannerjee talked to them about their school work, games, thoughts and dreams, and he verbally re-enacted the accident. All their comments were tape-recorded for data processing.

Dr. Bannerjee plans to return to England in May and take them to the scene of the accident to record their reactions.

The girls' father said : "I have never been a man to believe blindly. I always seek proof in everything.

"And in the case of the twins I believe we have proof beyond doubt that they are genuine cases of reincarnation.

"Last year my wife and I accidentally overheard them talking about the crash that happened before they were born.

"They also knew how to find their way to a playground in Henham Village, nearby. The other girls used to go to the playground whenever we went to Henham, but Jennifer and Gillian had never been there before."

Dr. Bannerjee said the twins' case was one of the most interesting he had heard of.

Courtesy : *The Sunday Standard*.

FROM THE GANGES TO THE AMAZON

By JEAN BUTLER

In Lima, Peru, about twenty years ago, a friend of mine who was deeply interested in psychical research came to see me one day, in a state of considerable excitement. He gave me a letter to read which had come from a priest posted in the jungles of the Amazonian region of Peru. The letter described the village where the priest lived as a tiny one consisting of about twenty mud-huts and inhabited by Kechua and Aymara Indians, none of whom spoke a word of Spanish. Not only were they ignorant of the national language, but also they were ignorant of the very name of their country. They were accustomed to saying that they lived "in the high place", or "on the bank of the river" which, to them, was their country. In view of this plus the fact that the priest was the only literate person in the village there was no possibility of any fraud or deception on the part of the correspondent.

He wrote that an Aymara couple had come to him in despair, bringing with them their small son, seven years old. They explained that he must be possessed by an evil spirit because he claimed that he wanted to go back to his parents in Banaras. On being asked where Banaras was, he stated, unhesitatingly, "India." The parents, of course had never heard of India, since, to them their country was "on the bank of the river." The priest questioned the little boy who told him in detail that he had just remembered his home in Banaras. He gave the name of his father and mother; the name of the street and a description of the house. He added the information that his father was a rich Brahmin who had given him a little goat-cart as a birthday present when he was seven. He was warned that he could play in the inner courtyard of the house but was not to go out into the street. When it was getting dark the little boy got bored with

the courtyard and decided to disobey his father and try his cart out in the street. He was killed by a motor car almost immediately. On his seventh birthday in Peru it had gradually begun to come back to him. He gave his Indian mother's maiden name and also described, in great detail, her appearance and even a silver necklace that she wore "like a collar". The little boy kept saying over and over again that he wanted to go back to Banaras.

The priest was dumbfounded because he knew, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that there was no possibility of any attempt at fraud or deception on the part of such simple, illiterate and primitive people. He wrote at once to my friend asking that he make an investigation of the case.

My friend, Augusto, a lawyer, wrote to the Municipal Authorities of Banaras asking for information about the Brahmin family the boy had described; also asking the maiden name of the Brahmin's wife and the number of children they had had, both living and dead. He stated that he would like to get in contact with them in order to give them information "about a matter which would be of great interest to them". Several months went by and we were packing up to leave Peru for good when, one morning, our friend came rushing in with a letter from Banaras stating that the Brahmin and his wife had been located; that they were living in the same house and had several living children, but that the oldest son had been killed by a motor-car on his seventh birthday. All the other details, including the mother's maiden-name were exactly as the boy had described them.

About a week later we left the country for good and have never heard the end of the story, although an account of it was published in one of the newspapers in Lima.

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

By K. K. NAMBIAR

How I came to the Maharshi? I wish I knew the answer! I know I didn't go to the Maharshi to seek any particular boon; nor did I go to him grief-stricken seeking solace; nor to get cured of any bodily afflictions. Perhaps, it was just curiosity—curiosity for anything supernatural. From my childhood, I had felt an urge to meet spiritual men, "yogis" and "sannyasis", some of whom demonstrated extraordinary physical feats and performed so-called miracles. The earliest recollection I have is of an ochre-clad yogi who floated on water and later stood on his head and did quite a number of difficult asanas, attracting a large crowd of admirers around him. I remember clinging on to this man late in the evening until all others had left him asking him to



teach me some of those feats. I must have been about 10 years old then. He taught me some pranayams and did a sort of 'initiation' by exerting some pressure on the lids of my closed eyes by his first and middle fingers which made me see some sparkling lights, on reopening of the eyes! Later, I had opportunities to see yogis and sadhus

of several types. One of them 'slept' on a cotton rope tied to two rafters, and another slept on branches of trees, and so on. 'Maharshis' I had only read of in Puranas—of benevolent Vasishta and Viswamitra, the hot-tempered Durvasas, and the wandering Narada who delighted in creating some mischief or other. But when I heard of a living Maharshi whom people could go and see and talk to, I must say I was truly sceptical.

My first introduction to Maharshi was through a little green booklet—a Malayalam translation of "Who am I". It was 32 years ago. I browsed through the booklet and got a general idea of the theme, which at that time did not carry much conviction to me. A few weeks later, the President of the Salem District Board under whom I worked as an Assistant Engineer at that time suggested a trip to Tiruvannamalai to see a Maharshi, who, in outward appearance looked a 'householder', ate, drank, and lived like one. From Salem we did the journey by car. We were shown into the hall where Maharshi reclined on a couch. We prostrated before him and sat down on the floor at some distance. No words passed between us; but I felt an indefinable sense of peace in his presence. My scepticism gave place to a sense of awe and reverence. I might have sat there for about an hour perhaps and wanted to bask in his presence longer; but on a sign given by my boss, I had to get up and prepare to leave the Ashram. Before doing so, I prostrated again before Maharshi and fervently prayed that I might have more opportunities to have his darshan. Opportunities I had because my brother-in-law Dr. P. C. Nambiar got posted to Tiruvannamalai as Doctor-in-charge of the Government Hospital. My sister Madhavi amma, a devoted soul, used to visit the Ashram quite often, and I too made a few visits from Dharmapuri to which place I had got transferred by then.

On one of these occasions, I made a small contribution for a 'Bhiksha' at the Ashram, which meant that all those present were to be fed sumptuously when Bhagavan also would share the meal along with them. At about noon, the bell sounded announcing 'Bhiksha' time and people started queuing into the dining hall—a large thatched shed at that time. The person leading the queue occupied the last corner seat and the second next to him and so on. When the queue stopped, I found that I was to sit right in front of Sri Bhagavan! This lucky coincidence gave me great satisfaction. Bhagavan seemed to sense this and rewarded me with a gracious smile. Soon people came with rice and other preparations. Bhagavan was to be served first. When rice was brought before his leaf, a small ball of rice rolled into his leaf even before the person had started serving him. Bhagavan looked at me smiling and said: "It falls by itself". This remark from Sri Bhagavan, I must say, gave me supreme delight and I can still recall the ecstasy I felt while partaking of that meal right in front of Sri Bhagavan and face to face with him hardly a yard separating our leaves. I felt that the morsels I ate were all Bhagavan's prasadam. That was the happiest meal in my life.

It is needless to say that by now my scepticism about a living Maharshi had all vanished like mist before the rising sun. From Dharmapuri I was transferred to Tirunelveli on promotion. I was now more distant from Tiruvannamalai. I started reading more about Maharshi and accepted the position that he was Lord Subramanya in human form. I prayed to him again and again to give me more opportunities to have his Darshan.

My prayer was answered miraculously. I got posted to Tiruvannamalai itself. It all came about in a most unexpected manner in February 1936. The then Government of Madras embarked on an experiment of bifurcating the large districts for more efficient administration. In this process, the District of North Arcot was divided into two, and the headquarters of the southern

half was fixed at Tiruvannamalai. The District Officers had to be duplicated. I was chosen as the District Board Engineer for "Tiruvannamalai District", and asked to start an Office at Tiruvannamalai Town itself. I had not even dreamt of such a thing until I received the posting orders. Was it not Bhagavan's Grace to have actually taken me over to his abode in this unexpected manner? Sceptics might call it just one of those coincidences that happen to everyone



some time or other; but to me it was an unmistakable blessing from Sri Bhagavan, who, in answer to my prayers, had in this way given me opportunities to have frequent darshan of him, to wash off my sins of omission and commission, and to derive such spiritual benefit, as I was fit to receive in his immediate presence.

I took full advantage of the situation and seldom failed to visit the Ashram on days I was at Headquarters. Needless to say I

felt that a gradual change for the good was taking place in me. There was hardly anyone who hadn't sensed the subtle influence of frequent visits to the Ashram and Darshan of Sri Bhagavan. Here, I might narrate an anecdote concerning a senior colleague of mine. His name was Sri Mallappa Rajugaru. When he came to Tiruvannamalai, I took him to the Ashram with me on three or four consecutive days. The next day when I went to his residence to take him along with me, he excused himself that he would rather stay at home. When questioned further, he stated that frequent visits to the Ashram might bring about a change in him and that he might develop a distaste for worldly things and ultimately renounce his job which he was not prepared to do. I might say, here, that this colleague of mine was well known for his zest for eating and pleasurable living, but he had certainly misjudged the possible consequences of his contact with the Maharshi and the Ashramites. Bhagavan never insisted upon anybody renouncing his job or changing his walk of life. If anything, it became easier for one to bear the burden of one's own responsibilities in life. I could testify to this from my own experience, and the statements of several other devotees.

By this time, I had picked up courage to talk to Bhagavan now and then. One of the

first things I did was to place on record my complete surrender to him, accepting him as my sole refuge in future. I wrote this in Sanskrit verse on a small piece of paper and after prostrating before him as usual placed the slip of paper near his feet. Bhagavan took it up, read it with a smile, and gave it back commenting on the parody I had made in the sloka. When I resumed my seat, Sri Bhagavan was steadily looking at me. The gracious look directed at me set my mind completely at rest.

From that time onwards my faith in Bhagavan grew stronger and stronger day by day. Hardly a week passed without some incident or other to strengthen my faith, and some indications to show that Bhagavan was looking after me. Though Bhagavan did not perform any miracles as such, miracles just happened all the same. One might call them fortuitous coincidences; then they were most extraordinary coincidences—call them what you will. I have seen dozens of them; some involving others, and some experienced by myself. Space permitting in these columns I shall endeavour to narrate some of them at least in future articles to be contributed to this Journal, for the benefit of the readers who might not have had the privilege of seeing such incidents first hand.

The Knower cannot become an object of knowledge.

—Shankara, *Taittiriya Upanishad*, 3-10-4.

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In some cases, although outwardly no change is visible, grace works. You want to break a big stone. Suppose after twenty blows it breaks. After giving one blow if you look at it, there is apparently no change. But the molecules inside the stone are affected. Every blow does its work and is necessary for the breaking of the stone at the twentieth blow.

—Swami Ramdas, *God-Experience*, p. 146.

HOW THE MAHARSHI CAME TO ME

By MUDr. ROBERT FUCHSBERGER

Twenty years ago, in July 1946, it occurred to me that the 50th anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramana's arrival at Tiruvannamalai was approaching (Sept. 1, 1946). I wrote a letter to Sri Bhagavan which I posted on the 5th of August. It ran thus:

'Bodily far away from Arunachala, but spiritually at Bhagavan Sri Ramana's feet, I am just thinking with reverence that half a century has passed by since the young Venkataraman came to Tiruvannamalai. O Maharshi! I take the liberty of celebrating this date as Sri Bhagavan's real birthday. I celebrate it by throwing myself in the dust at Sri Bhagavan's feet yet with more reverence, awe and humility, and by trying to listen to Maharshi's voice in my own heart.'

After sending this letter I continued my routine life, filled during the day with professional work, followed by a sound, dreamless sleep during the night. In the morning and evening I always devoted some time to meditation. This normal flow of events was interrupted one night in the middle of August by a mysterious event.

Suddenly Sri Bhagavan appeared before me in my sleep. It was a very vivid dream in which I saw Sri Bhagavan's figure, which was familiar to me from a picture that I had received from the Ashram. The whole head was surrounded by a halo of silver light which illuminated not only Sri Bhagavan's face, but also the whole space around. But the most fascinating were Sri Bhagavan's eyes: dark, motionless and deep like the mysterious depth of the fathomless ocean, full of wisdom yet at the same time full of love and understanding. Fascinated by these eyes I could do nothing but look into them and into the abyss of transcendental wisdom which they conveyed.

I do not know how long this dream lasted, but it was so vivid and thrilling that I woke.



Nevertheless the vision continued in the same form and intensity as during sleep. I sat up in my bed still gazing at the vision. I opened my eyes but there was no change; still those piercing eyes, that motionless look. The bedroom was lit up by the light emanating from Sri Bhagavan's head. My academically trained mind began slowly to exercise control; I closed and opened my eyes alternately, I looked at my wrist-watch—it was half past twelve—and looked again at Sri Bhagavan. The vision still remained unchanged. Then I lighted my night lamp; now I saw Sri Bhagavan with open eyes only vaguely, but with closed eyes as well as before in the darkness. So I again turned out the light and sat in bed gazing at Sri Bhagavan, until after some time the vision began slowly to fade away. Then I lay down and immediately fell asleep.

The next morning peace and bliss that passes understanding filled my heart; this state continued in spite of daily work and trouble.

On 23rd August I received a letter from Sri Ramanashram, posted on the 15th, in which there was an invitation to the Golden Jubilee celebrations and a few lines signed by Sri Niranjanananda Swami. The Sarvadhikari acknowledged the receipt of my letter, which was placed before Sri Bhagavan and informed me that the letter would find a place in a volume which would be published on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Sri Bhagavan's arrival at Sri Arunachala.

This book — the *Golden Jubilee Souvenir* — I received only two years later. I found my letter in it under the little: 'At Sri Bhagavan's Feet.'

What really happened when my letter arrived at Sri Ramanashram and was placed before Sri Bhagavan, I came only to know 18 years later when Ramanashram book depot published the book *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam* by Smt. Nagamma. The author writes this in English translation in chapter 61:

'Amongst the letters received by the ashram today (the 16th August 1946) there

was one in English from a devotee in Czechoslovakia. Seeing it Bhagavan affectionately told us all about it and read it out in the hall. The gist of it is (here follows the above letter. Then Smt. Nagamma continues) "While all of us were expressing our delight on hearing the contents of that letter, Bhagavan said with a face radiant with benevolence; 'We do not know who he is and what his name and native place are. He never came here. How has he managed to know that it is full fifty years since I came here? He has written a letter full of devotion. From what he has written it looks as if he has read about my life and understood it. This letter has come unexpectedly. That is how things happen. See the peculiarity! Where is Czechoslovakia and where is Tiruvannamalai? What are we to say when a person who has never been here writes thus?'"

The kindness with which Sri Bhagavan received my letter I take to be a confirmation about the vision in August 1946. I consider it to be the Guru's mouna diksha or initiation by silence, though I experienced it like initiation by look. But what matter such differences in the realm of Spirit? Certainly it was a manifestation of Sri Bhagavan's Grace.

A Telugu Pandit asked Sri Bhagavan about nishkama karma. There was no reply. After a time Sri Bhagavan went up the hill and a few followed him, including the pandit. There was a thorny stick lying on the way which Sri Bhagavan picked up; he sat down and began leisurely to work at it. The thorns were cut off, the knots were made smooth, the whole stick was polished with a rough leaf. The whole operation took about six hours. Everyone was wondering at the fine appearance of the stick made of a spiky material. A shepherd boy suddenly put in his appearance on the way as the group moved off. He had lost his stick and was at a loss. Sri Bhagavan immediately gave the new one in his hand to the boy and passed on.

The pandit said that this was the matter-of-fact answer to his question.

SOME REMINISCENCES

By KUNJU SWAMI¹

After spending about twelve years in personal attendance on Bhagavan, I began to feel an urge to devote myself entirely to sadhana, spending my time all alone. However, I could not easily reconcile myself to the idea of giving up my personal service to Bhagavan. I had been debating the matter for some days when the answer came in a strange way. As I entered the hall one day I heard Bhagavan explaining to others who were there that real service to him did not mean attending to his physical needs but following the essence of his teaching: that is concentrating on realizing the Self. Needless to say, that automatically cleared my doubts.

I therefore gave up my Ashram duties, but I then found it hard to decide how in fact I should spend the entire day in search of Realization. I referred the matter to Bhagavan and he advised me to make Self-enquiry my final aim but to practise Self-enquiry, meditation, japa and recitation of scripture turn by turn, changing over from one to another as and when I found the one I was doing irksome or difficult. In course of time, he said, the sadhana would become stabilised in Self-enquiry or pure Consciousness or Realization.

From my personal experience, as well as from that of others within my knowledge, I can say that before recommending any path to an aspirant Bhagavan would first find out from him what aspect or form or path he was naturally drawn to and then recommend him to follow it. He would sometimes endorse the traditional stages of sadhana, advancing from worship (puja) to incantation (japa), then to meditation (dhyana), and finally to Self-enquiry (vichara). However, he also used to say that continuous and rigorous practice of any one of these methods was adequate in itself to lead to Realization. Thus, for instance,

when one adopts the method of worship, say of the Shakti, one should, by constant practice and concentration, be able to see the Shakti everywhere and always and in everything and thus give up identification with the ego. Similarly with japa. By constant and continuous repetition of a mantra one gets merged in it and loses all sense of separate individuality. In dhyana again, in constant meditation, with bhavana or deep feeling, one attains the state of Bhavanatheeta, which is only another name for pure Consciousness. Thus, any method, if taken earnestly and practised unremittingly, will result in elimination of the "I" and lead to the goal of Realization.

Once some awkward problems concerning Ashram management cropped up. Without being directly concerned, I was worried about them, as I felt that failure to solve them satisfactorily would impair the good name of the Ashram. One day two or three devotees went to Bhagavan and put the problems before him. I happened to enter the hall while they were talking about them, and he immediately turned to me and asked me why I had come in at this time and why I was interesting myself in such matters. I did not grasp the meaning of his question, so Bhagavan explained that a person should occupy himself only with that purpose with which he had originally come to the Ashram and asked me what my original purpose had been. I replied: "To receive Bhagavan's Grace." So he said: "Then occupy yourself with that only."

He further continued by asking me whether I had any interest in matters concerning the Ashram management when I first came here. On my replying that I had not, he added: "Then concentrate on the original purpose of your coming here."

¹ For an introduction to whom see our April, 1966 issue, p. 217.

TRUE-SEEING

By WEI WU WEI

Hello, what are you worried about?

How do you know I am worried?

God, or whoever it was, gave you a face for some reason or other? Birds not caught! My only 'face' is the original one that I had before my father and mother were born—and it can't look worried!

Right! And the worry?

I've come to the conclusion, and finally, that Bob what's-his-name is not only a bore, but a mean and selfish sort of bastard! Don't you agree?

Why should I? You describe *your* Bob what's-his-name: *mine* is not likely to be identical.

Damn it all, there is only one Bob in question, and we are both talking about him!

I am unable to agree! There are as many Bob what's-his-names as there are people who know him, plus one.

Metaphysically speaking perhaps, but the familiar phenomenal Bob is surely whatever he is!

Nonsense! There is no such being. What you are referring to is absolutely no thing whatever; 'he' is as devoid of objective existence as anyone else.

As you or me?

Of course.

Then what is he?

He is an image in mind. You have just described what he is according to your image. In my image he appears slightly different, and less objectionable. His own 'Bob'—as he appears to himself—is probably the hell of a fine fellow!

But there must be something that he really is!

Nothing whatever, absolutely *no thing*. He has, rigorously, no objective existence or being. He is only appearances in mind,

interpreted diversely in a space-time context.

But whose appearances?

Ours: he appears to each of us as each of us sees him. What else is there for him to be?

Very well, but his? His own appearance to himself?

That also is a concept, nothing but a concept—his is not different in kind, but only it is not a dose of salts! Just an almost in interpretation. You are supposing that his own is something factual, but it is not.

Would anyone believe that?

Probably not—unless he saw it. Condition-
ing is too strong.

Then who could take it?

It is not a dose of salts! Just an almost painfully obvious fact.

To whom?

Only to whoever can see that it must be so, that so it is, that it is fundamental, the very heart of how things are.

And when he sees it, what then?

If he really sees it—for hearing it or reading it is not seeing that so it is—he surely at the same time sees through everything that needs to be seen through—for all the rest follows.

Each of us needs to see it for himself and in his own way?

Each of us knows it for himself—if he is looking from the right direction.

And what is that?

From whole-mind, always from whole-mind.

Can one always do that?

Once should be enough. Let this one be it. It is better than all the ko-ans and conundrums that have ever been invented.

Why is that?

There is nothing artificial about it! It is just plain true-seeing.



The Bhagavad Gita

Translated by Prof. G. V. KULKARNI and ARTHUR OSBORNE

CHAPTER EIGHT

Since this whole issue of *The Mountain Path* is concerned mainly with reincarnation we are giving here the chapter of the Gita which has most to do with that subject instead of the next in sequence. In our next issue we shall take up the next in sequence, that is Chapter V.

1

Arjuna asked :

What is Brahman ? What is the self of man ? What is karma, O Supreme Being ? What is the reality of the world and what the reality of heaven ?

This and the following verses are hard to translate on account of their technical terminology. *Purushottama*, the emphatic form of *Purusha*, meaning "male person" or "the Spirit" (in contradistinction to "Prakriti" meaning "Substance" or "Primordial Nature") we have translated "Supreme Being".

2

What is the meaning and manner of sacrifice in this body, O Slayer of Madhu ? And how are You to be realized at the time of death by the self-controlled ?

3

Sri Bhagavan replied :

Brahman is the Imperishable (akshara) Supreme (parama). One's own nature (svabhava) is said to be the self of man (adhyatma). Karma is the name given to the force which creates beings.

4

Perishable (kshara) nature (bhava) is the reality of the world (adhibhuta) and Purusha (the Cosmic Being) the reality of heaven. The basis of sacrifice in the body am I, O Best of the Embodied.

5

Whoever at the time of death dwells on Me alone while giving up the body, he attains to Me. Of this there is no doubt.

6

And whatever the mind dwells on at the end while giving up the body, O Son of Kunti, that does one become, being absorbed in it.

Hence the importance attached in all religions to the state of mind in which a man dies. The Maharshi warned, however, that it is no use leaving it till death, because if the mind has not already been brought under control it will rise up uncontrollably at death. This explains the need for the next verse.

7

Therefore at all times remember Me and fight. Your mind (manas) and understanding (buddhi) surrendered to Me, to Me shall you surely come.

8

He who holds his mind unwaveringly to this yoga of constant practice comes to the Supreme (parama) Divine (divya) Being (Purusha), O Son of Pritha.

9, 10

He who, at the time of death, centres his life-force between the eyebrows, with a firm mind endued with devotion and the power of yoga, and remembers Me, the Sage, the Ancient, the Ruler, Smaller than the smallest yet Supporter of all, Inconceivable of form, Effulgent as the Sun, Transcending darkness (of tamas), he attains that Supreme Divine Person.

11

I will briefly describe to you that state which knowers of the Vedas call eternal (akshara), which passion-free Sages enter,

and in quest of which men observe celibacy (brahmacharya).

12, 13

He who, at the time of leaving the body, closes all the gateways of the senses, fixing his mind in his heart and his life-breath in his head and, remembering Me, utters the Divine Monosyllable OM, he attains the Supreme State.

14

To him who dwells constantly on Me alone in fixed attention I am readily accessible, O Son of Pritha.

15

Having attained to Me, the Great Ones (Mahatmas) do not return to birth, which is the domain of suffering and impermanence, for they have entered the Supreme State.

16

From Brahmaloка downwards, all worlds involve rebirth, Arjuna; but on attaining to Me, O Son of Kunti, there is no return to birth.

17

Knowers of Day and Night know that a thousand ages make up the Day of Brahma and a thousand ages His Night.

The word used here for "age" is yuga, but it is not used to mean one of the four sections of a manvantara, as in the term "kali-yuga". The Day and Night of Brahma are the alternate phases of manifestation and dissolution of the universe. "Brahma" here means "God the Creator", not 'Brahman, the Absolute.' As Bhagavan indicated in the explanations reported on pp. 148-9 of *The Mountain Path* of July 1965, Brahmaloка is the highest of the heavens but still subject to dissolution at the end of a Day of Brahma, so that one who abides in it is brought back to rebirth, whereas, as Sri Krishna says, in verse 15, one who has attained to Self-realization, which he there calls "the Supreme State" has no more return to birth.

18

At the dawning of that Day all things stream forth from the Unmanifest, and at

the coming on of Night they sink back into that same Unmanifest.

19

After repeated births, this same multitude of beings merge helpless again at the approach of Night, O Son of Pritha, and they issue forth at the dawn of Day.

20

But beyond this Unmanifest is another, the Eternal Unmanifest, which perishes not when all things perish.

The alteration of Day and Night, manifestation and dissolution, is on the background of this Supreme Unmanifest which is unaffected by either.

21

This Supreme State is called the Unmanifest Imperishable (avyakta akshara). That is My highest abode. For those who attain to it there is no return.

22

This Supreme Being (Parah-Purusha), O Son of Pritha, in Whom all beings are and Who permeates all this, is attainable by single-minded devotion.

23

Now I will tell you, O Best of the Bharatas, at what times yogis departing return again, and at what times they do not return.

24

Knowers of Brahman departing hence by fire, by light, by daytime, in the bright

fortnight of the moon and the ascending course of the sun, attain to Brahman.

The bright fortnight is from new moon to full, and the ascending course of the sun from the winter to the summer solstice.

25

Yogis who go forth by smoke, by night, in the dark fortnight and in the declining course of the sun pass hence to the light of the moon and return again.

The path described in verse 24 is known as devayana, "the path of the gods", and that in verse 25 as pitriyana, "the path of the ancestors". From the former there is no return to birth, from the latter there is.

26

These two paths, the light and the dark, are held to be eternal. By the one a man goes forth not to return again; by the latter he returns.

27

The yogi who knows these two paths, O Son of Pritha, is never deluded. Therefore, Arjuna, remain ever firm in yoga.

28

The Yogi who knows all this transcends the rewards of merit accruing from Vedic study, sacrifice, austerity and charity and attains the Supreme Primal Abode.

Here ends the Eighth Chapter entitled "The Yoga of the Imperishable Brahman"

You never enjoy the world aright, till the sea floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens, and crowned with the stars: and perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the whole world, and more than so, because men are in it who are every one sole heirs as well as you.

— Centuries of Meditations, Thomas Traherne.



REVIEWS

✓
REINCARNATION, THE RING OF RETURN:
By Eva Martin. (University Books, New Hyde
Park, New York, pp. 306, \$5.00.)

We have here a fascinating anthology of quotations, ancient and modern, Eastern and Western, dealing with reincarnation. The contents are divided chronologically and then each chronological section subdivided according to religion or country of origin. It might be said that Western and modern quotations are allotted a disproportionately large amount of space, but then we all know that the Eastern religions teach reincarnation and it is interesting to see how many of the philosophers, poets and other writers of the West also postulate it.

In Ancient Greece it was a tradition that flowed through Pythagoras and Plato down to Plotinus and the Neo-Platonists. Traces of it are found among the Hebrews in the Old Testament and also in the Gospels. It is found in some of the early Christians such as Origen. Roman commentators report its prevalence among the Celts.

In her introduction the compiler takes the optimistic view that we can only progress, not decline, insofar as a man can never fall back into any subhuman birth. This is reminiscent of the modern Christian tendency to believe in heaven but not hell or of the 19th Century belief in inevitable progress. There is no such guarantee. Freedom means freedom to fall as well as rise. That is why the Hindu and Buddhist scriptures warn so earnestly that a human birth is a very precious thing and should be used seriously for spiritual effort as it may not be easily come by again.

COMPARATIVE RELIGION

RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD: By D. E.
Harding. (Heinemann, pp. 128, price 6s.)

MANY PATHS, ONE HEAVEN: By Nuri Mass.
(The Writers' Press, 81 Prospect Road, Summer Hill, N.S.W., Australia, pp. 128, 22s. 6d.)

Comparative religion began with the 'Golden Bough' school, whose aim was to bring religion in general into contempt by linking it up with primitive superstitions. Later it fell into the hands of missionary-minded exponents (some of whom are still in the field), who sought to belittle all religions except their own. The two books now under review represent the new tendency to write with reverence and appreciation of all religions.

Messrs. Heinemann are to be congratulated on turning for the book on religions in their paperback adult education series to Douglas Harding, who is a 'Mountain Path' writer and a true mystic. He points out with equal skill the unanimous spiritual essence of all religions and its different mode of presentation in each one. And he does this in a manner admirably suited to such a series: that is as though talking to his readers rather than lecturing them.

In reading the chapter on Hinduism I was shocked at the amount of matter left out, until I reminded myself that he had compressed into some 120 pages information about the six major religions as well as an introduction and conclusion, and without any signs of compression; then I became amazed at the amount he had got in.

Perhaps it is hardly to be expected that a writer should be equally sympathetic towards all religions, and it is clear that Mr. Harding's sympathies go rather to the Eastern or metaphysical than to the Western or theistic. He would have done well to acquaint himself with what some Jewish mystics have to say about it before denying that ancient Judaeism had any mysticism. Mysticism is the essence of every religion; without it there is only the husk. Even of Christianity he asserts: "Clearly Christianity is not a mystical religion," although he later pays tribute to Christian mystics.

And he seems to have retained the traditional Western prejudices against Islam — that even Muslims do not regard Mohammad as a saintly character; that the later chapters of the Quran seem to be conscious thought, not revelation; that Jews and Christians are included in the Quran among the infidels and that the Muslims are incited to make war against them; that the Islamic conception of God is only transcendent and not immanent (although he actually quotes the Quranic verse: "God is nearer to man than his neck-vein"); that mysticism only arose some two centuries after the Quran; and others plenty.

On the whole, however, this book is much to be welcomed. It presents a profound view of the meaning and purpose of religion in simple language that all can understand. It is a great pity that it is a paperback with the pages only stuck together so that they start coming apart at the first reading.

The second book gives an appreciative and informative account of the major religions but is much simpler, being written, we are told, in line with the Australian school syllabus. We are not told that it has actually been prescribed for school use. It would indeed be heartening to find a country enlightened enough to teach its children what they ought to know about the world's great religions.

THE WAY OF THE WHITE CLOUDS: By Lama Anagarika Govinda. (Hutchinson, pp. 305, price 50s.)

Lama Govinda studies Tibetan Buddhism from within — the way a religion ought to be studied. His understanding of its vast resources is strengthened by reverence for its saints, and especially for his own Guru, Tomo Geshe Rimpoche. At the same time his book is free from the mystery-mongering that marred some earlier works on Tibet.

It is mainly autobiographical. He tells how intellectual appreciation induced him to choose the Buddhism of Ceylon. When he visited Tibet the powerful spiritual influence there turned him to Tantric Buddhism even before he was able to study its theory. His residences and travels in Tibet were partly for spiritual development, partly in an effort to preserve records of some at least of the treasures of Tibetan Buddhist art before it was too late. The pen and eye of an artist enable him to give some indication of the magnificence of Tibetan sculpture and art and of the stupendous mountain scenery, while his deep understanding enables him to point out the meaning of the iconography which an untutored critic could so easily misrepresent. In this work he was helped valiantly by his wife, Li Gotami. The result is a magnificent book giving, better than any other, an impression of the splendour that has been destroyed in Tibet.

Was the author being drawn back to the scenes of a previous lifetime in his devotion to Tibet? One whole section of the book is devoted to reincarnation of which some remarkable instances are given. It is a pity that he has succumbed to the temptation which seems to assail most Buddhists, of sniping at Hinduism. He represents "the way of the average Hindu mystic" (p. 114) as "regression to the state of unity" in comparison with the Buddhist aim "to be fully born". To retrace one's steps to the Source and discover (as Zen Buddhism puts it) one's original face as it is before one was born, is not "regression" but Realization of what is. And what of those whom the Buddha and his contemporaries referred to as 'non-returners'? Were they cases of 'regression'? In Hinduism and Buddhism alike, some Masters have promised to return for the well-being of their followers, while others have transcended the universe in which return and followers are possible.

It is a pity too that the author has not got some one to correct the sprinkling of grammatical mistakes that mar his English.

BUDDHIST MEDITATION AND DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY: By Douglas M. Burns. (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Ceylon, pp. 67, price not stated.)

"Buddhism does not deny the reality of material existence, nor does it ignore the very great effect that the physical world has upon us. On the contrary, it refutes the body-mind dichotomy of the Brahmins and says that mind and body are interdependent." Who are "the Brahmins"? And which of the many schools of the Sanatana

Dharma or 'Eternal Harmony' known to Westerners as 'Hinduism' does the author refer to as denying that "mind and body are interdependent"? It can hardly be any yogic or tantric school, since they rely largely on physical disciplines. It is a pity that so many Buddhist writers seem unable to expound their dhamma without setting up what they call 'Hinduism' or 'the Brahmins' as a sort of Aunt Sally to take potshots at. As for "the reality of material existence", the author should know that it is upheld by the school of Madhva as firmly as it is denied by that of Shankara, and — what is more important — it is recognized by Advaitins as being a question of degrees of understanding, not a problem to which one answer is right and the other wrong, as in mathematics. It does not behove an exponent of wisdom to condemn other expositions unstudied.

THE DHAMMAPADA WITH INTRODUCTORY ESSAYS, Pali text, English translation and notes: By Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. (Oxford University Press, pp. 194. Price Rs. 10.)

The Dhammapada has the strong ethical emphasis that one expects to find in Theravada texts. The present annotated translation of it was first published in 1950. The new, 1966, edition is the first to be printed in India. It has a competent introduction comparing the teaching of Buddha with that of the Upanishads. What gives it particular interest is that it is an appreciative edition of a scripture of one religion by an outstanding exponent of another.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE BUDDHA, THE RELIGION OF REASON and MEDITATION: By George Grimm. (Akademie Verlag, Berlin. pp. 415, price not stated.)

George Grimm was one of the pioneers of Buddhist understanding in the West, and one of those who put Germany in the forefront in this enterprise. I say advisedly 'understanding' rather than 'studies' because, as Max Hoppe puts it in the preface to the present (1958) revised edition of this book, first published as far back as 1915: "It is evident that a teaching which sages in their hearts acknowledge is particularly shaky when it is subjected to the interpretation of scribes and scholars who lack that which the teaching first brings to life, namely the inner experience." Unfortunately some of the early interpreters of Buddhism to the West wrote in a spirit of deliberate ill-will, and even of those who did not, many lacked this essential inner experience. George Grimm is one of the

few who wrote with understanding. His book is a solid study of the essence of Buddhism, that is the truth of suffering and the Noble Eightfold Way by which to transcend it. It is a study undertaken with reverence and appreciation.

Apart from writing, Grimm founded the 'Altbuddhistische Gemeinde' ('Old Buddhist Community') at Utting am Ammersee as long ago as 1921. His book has now reached us in connection with this society's request to act as our agent for Germany. We are happy to be represented by such a society.

AN INTRODUCTION TO ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY: By A. H. Armstrong. (Methuen, University Paperbacks, pp. 242, price 12s. 6d.)

There must be something special about a book on philosophy that gets reprinted as a paperback twenty years after its first appearance. It is its human approach and very readable style that give so much appeal to this one.

Reading it impresses upon one that the pre-Socratic Greek philosophers ought to be studied by a historian familiar with true metaphysical teaching, as expounded, for instance, in the Upanishads. He might find that they were not making crude guesses at truth, as their Western historian is apt to presume, but giving their versions of a partially understood spiritual tradition, whether indigenous or foreign, with its true teaching of the unceasing change of manifestation, the Immutable Being behind it, and the journey of the individual through life after life on its way back to the Immutable. Even so-called opposites, like Heraclitus and Parmenides, may well be describing different flanks of the same mountain.

GOD IS MY ADVENTURE: By Rom Landau. (Unwin Books, paperback, pp. 255, price 8s. 6d., 1964.)

'God is My Adventure', describing the spiritual leaders of the West in the twenties and thirties, was a best seller in its time. The present new edition contains a brief postscript bringing it up-to-date. In this the author declares that there are no spiritual leaders in the sixties of like stature to those he has described in the thirties. He does not envisage the situation aright.

The spiritual leaders of the thirties whom he describes were to some extent individualists departing from the eternal and immutable truth underlying all religions, although appearing in different garb in each one of them. At the same time, another movement was taking place, of

which he does not seem to have been aware. This was the education of intellectual seekers in the West into this eternal and immutable truth through the books and articles of René Guénon. The result was the rise of an informed public who would not be impressed by the sort of teachers Rom Landau describes, but who sought the pure truths preserved alive in Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and other teachings. There were other influences converging in this new trend also — the delving into Christian mystics by Evelyn Underhill, the universal Christian mysticism of Joel Goldsmith, the Zen expositions of D. T. Suzuki. Even Rom Landau himself found the strongest appeal in Sufi teaching — and not the modernised 'Sufism' to be found in the Europe of his day but the true classical tradition of Ibn Arabi. Above all, there is the influence of Ramana Maharshi, presenting the authentic teaching of the ancient Rishis in modern garb. Indeed, the quest for guidance in the West has attained maturity since the thirties.

INITIATION INTO YOGA: By Sri Krishna Prem. (Manisha Granthalaya (Pte) Ltd., 4/3B, Bankim Chatterjee St., Calcutta-12, pp. 43, price Rs. 1.50.)

Sri Krishna Prem (of whom there is an obituary notice in our issue of Jan. this year) was widely known and revered as a bhakta. Nevertheless, this little spiritual guide-book of his is almost exclusively in terms of mind control. One might, indeed, have taken it to be by a follower of the Maharshi except that it concentrates too much on investigation into thoughts rather than into the thinker. It is a cogent and lucid exposition. The term 'yoga' in it is used in a general sense, as in the Gita, with no reference to any specifically yogic path.

ARTHUR OSBORNE.

REINCARNATION, AN EAST-WEST ANTHOLOGY: Compiled by Joseph Head and S. L. Cranston. (The Julian Press, New York, price \$6.50.)

This comprehensive and valuable book should be on the desk of every leader, teacher, churchman and writer, of all who instruct and who mould contemporary thought.

Clearly printed and attractively got up, it is a pleasant book to handle and easy to study. References are easily traced in the very complete index, while one glance through its table of contents shows what a wide range in time and space it covers despite its compactness.

It is interesting to compare this new-comer with Eva Martin's 'Ring of Return', first published some 40 years earlier though recently republished. What were then regarded as queer ideas are now much more widely known and accepted, as are the names of those who expound this ancient wisdom. Three quarters of the present book are culled from Western sources. Even of the first quarter (some 80 pages), only 22 are from the Orient, commonly reputed to be the sole home of this teaching. Excellent translations bring all peoples and periods to our desk in common array and clearly grouped. Much detailed study has gone into the Church's reputed stand at the momentous and disastrous Council of Constantinople in 553, throwing much new light on early Christian 'MacCarthyism' — with some surprising conclusions.

EBBANA BLANCHARD.

THE TANTRIC TRADITION: By Agehananda Bharati. (Rider and Company, London, Pp. 350. Price: Sh. 50.)

The chief merit of this book lies in its scholarly approach to the study of the Tantric tradition. But that is also its chief weakness, for excessive scholarliness and objectivity have not only rendered the work lopsided but have removed from the treatment of so inspiring and elevating a subject as the Tantra every vestige of interest. The author has taken great pains to collect a mass of material from various book sources, Indian and foreign, but from the welter of this rich data the true spirit of the Tantra has taken flight. This is indeed a pity, for the author, although not Indian by birth, is an initiate of a Hindu order, has lived in this country and has had an insight into the essential spirit of Hindu and Tantric lore. But, ostensibly, in line with many of the Western scholars of the present day, he has fallen victim to a method, a system, to which the subject of his study should subserve. These academic scholars are never more happy than when they dissect a living thing and lay bare its entrails calling the process by high sounding names like linguistic analysis, logical empiricism and other modern jargons. Their logical tool may be sophisticated enough to remove husk from wheat but usually only the chaff remains, the seed being thrown away.

To the credit of the author it must be said that his analysis of some of the crucial Sanskrit and Tibetan Buddhist tantric terms is a praiseworthy attempt; so is his comparative statement on the Hindu and Buddhist tantric tradi-

tions vis-a-vis the non-tantric Vedanta and Buddhism. It should, however, be borne in mind that there is no fundamental antagonism between the Tantra and the Vedas or the Upanishads as most such scholars would have us believe. Tantra is not a protestant faith, nor is its practice and discipline an attempted return to an earlier, pre-Vedic culture. On the other hand, Tantra is a continuation of esoteric discipline handed down by the Rishis of the Vedas but so modified as to meet the changing times and needs of a developing humanity. If the intuitive teaching of the Vedas was intended for a few, and the widening knowledge of the Upanishads for a larger section, the teaching and practice of the Tantra was intended for one and all, men and women alike, of whatever denomination or persuasion.

The chapter on Mantra covers a large section of the book and deservedly so. Mantra is in effect the soul of the Tantra. Mantra is not a senseless incantation of a jumble of syllables or words. It has its root in the occult perception of an Idea or truth vibrating with a dynamic power. The ancient seers of Mantras realized that each such sound-form has its particular deity that can be invoked by right concentration on incantation. But the Mantra, to be effective, must be imparted by a Guru to his disciple under right conditions; otherwise, it remains a word or words like other words of human speech. The author's exposition of this aspect of the matter is satisfying.

'Sadhaka and sadhana' is another chapter dealing elaborately with Tantric discipline in general and ritualistic practice in particular. But the author's elaborate discussion of the erotic symbolism and sexual practice of what is only a very small section of the left-hand path of Tantric tradition gives a totally distorted and disproportionate picture of the situation. As the author himself points out, one need not undergo the exhaustive, intricate and difficult discipline prescribed by the Tantra just in order to indulge in an orgy of fornication. The point that, like all other things in life, even sex, under certain conditions, can be harnessed for the purpose of self-transcendence is missed.

As we said earlier, the book gives a very large number of references and quotations — from books and living authorities. All told, the book is informative, crowded with detail of all kinds but it fails to breathe the life-spirit of the Tantra. It is a book without a soul.

M. P. PANDIT.

METHODS OF KNOWLEDGE ACCORDING TO ADVAITA: By Swami Satprakashananda. (Allen & Unwin, pp. 366, price 50s.)

The author of this work is the founder-head of the 'Vedanta Society' of St. Louis, Mo., USA, and a senior member of the Ramakrishna Mission. He has been working as a spiritual leader for the past twenty-six years.

The book deals with the epistemology of Advaita Vedanta and also, in the last two chapters, discusses the Mahavakyas or 'Great Sayings' of the Upanishads and the fruit of Brahma Vidya or Divine Knowledge. While the treatment of the Mahavakyas is very good, one wonders how it is relevant to the Advaita theory of knowledge.

The author bases his treatment of the pramanas or modes of knowledge on the 'Vedanta Paribhasa' of Dharmaraja but gives the views of other writers also wherever necessary. It is rather puzzling that he makes no reference at all to Mimamsa epistemology, which is admittedly the basis of Advaita epistemology. A comparative study of 'Sloka Vartika' with 'Vedanta Paribhasa' would have given us more information on the subject. Similarly, he ignores the theory of illusion propounded by the Bhattas and describes merely the Viveka khyati of Prabhakara, identifying it with Mimamsa theory. He discusses all the six pramanas, though dealing with perception and testimony more elaborately than with the others.

Western readers especially will find the appendices and bibliography extremely helpful.

The exposition of the pramanas is rather descriptive than argumentative and the reader is not troubled with unnecessary discussion. The book is a useful contribution to Indian epistemology.

PROF. S. RAJAGOPALA SASTRI.

THE SURANGAMA SUTRA: Translated by Charles Luk. (Rider, pp. 262, 40s.)

The Surangama is a highly technical sutra, setting forth the ways of breaking through the five aggregates and the eight consciousnesses to attain enlightenment by exposing the unreality of the ego. It also describes the various posthumous states and conditions awaiting those who fail to do this. It is pre-eminently a sutra for the Mahayana Buddhist to study in detail, not for the philosopher or the non-Buddhist to theorise about. Charles Luk has rendered a great service in making it available to Western Buddhists.

BODHICHITTA.

OTHER BOOKS

THE MYSTERIES OF GOD IN THE UNIVERSE :

By H. S. Spencer. (Published privately at 18, Bandra Hill, Bombay 50, pp. 175. Rs. 1.50).

Mr. Spencer's book is mainly concerned with finding evidence of reincarnation in the monotheistic scriptures, Zoroastrian, Christian and Islamic. He strains the texts considerably in doing so.

A LYRIC OF LIFE AND A PSALM OF THE SOUL, being Sri Shankara's Bhaja Govindam and Sri Kulasekhara's Mukunda Mala, rendered in English by R. N. Aingar and Mrs. J. D. Westbrook. (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chowpatty, Bombay, pp. 24, 50 paise.)

This little booklet gives us in juxtaposition a famous song of Divine Knowledge and one of devotion to Sri Krishna. The rendering is in verse and is far more felicitous than most such attempts.

EPISODES AND EXPERIENCES: By Swami Krishnanand. (Shanti Ashram, Bhadrán, via Anand, Gujarat. pp. 179. Not for sale. Sent free on request.)

The adventures of Swami Krishnanand as he travels about India are told in a lively style that

is often hilariously though unintentionally humorous. Some of the episodes are interesting in themselves, and some enlightening, though less so than his previous collection entitled 'Sermons in the Storms', reviewed in our issue of Jan. 1965. The story of a ghost who atomises money in the coffers of black marketeers and re-materialises it for a famous South Indian Swami gives one to think.

AT THY FEET: By P. V. Bobde. (Published by the author, 36 Rambag, Indore, pp. 73, Rs. 2.)

This little collection of devotional pieces in poetic prose is reminiscent of Tagore, but unfortunately the mastery of English is not equal to that of Tagore and the romantic sounding style no longer suits the spirit of the age.

UPANISHADIC STORIES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE: By Swami Tattwananda. (The Bangalore Press, Post Box 507, Bangalore 18. pp. 122, Rs. 3.75.)

The Upanishads are the explicatory part of the Vedas. Their expositions are not in the modern style of philosophical theses but mainly through dialogue and story. In this little book Swami Tattwananda expounds some of these wise and witty stories of investigation as to the Self, reality, Brahma and discovery that they are all the same.

Mr. Paul Bruntón, while reading *Upadesa Manjari* came across the statement that the ego, the world and God are all unreal. He desired to use a different word for God or at least a qualifying adjective, e.g., the Creative Force or personal God.

Sri Bhagavan explained that God means SAMASHTI i.e., all that is plus the Be-ing — in the same way as 'I' means the individual plus the Being, and the world means the variety plus Be-ing. The Be-ing is in all cases real. The all, the variety and the individual is in each case unreal. So also in the union of the real and the unreal, the mixing up or the false identification is wrong. It amounts to saying sad-asad-vilakshana i.e., transcending the real and the unreal — sat and asat. Reality is that which transcends all concepts, including that of God. Inasmuch as the name of God is used, it cannot be true. The Hebrew word Jehovah = (I am) expresses God correctly. Absolute Be-ing is beyond expression. The word cannot be replaced nor need it be replaced.

Ashram Bulletin

ARADHANA

April 18th was the 16th Aradhana day of Bhagavan by the Tamil calendar, that is the 16th anniversary of his leaving the body. By the Western calendar it is April 14th. As usual, there was a large and well attended celebration. Sri S. L. Silam, Lt.-Governor of Pondicherry, was there; also the International Tennis Champion Sri Ramanathan Krishnan, with his father Ramanatha Iyer and his father-in-law, a veteran devotee, Sri T. S. Sitapathi. For many years Sri Sitapathi, son-in-law of Janaki Mata (for an article on whom see our issue of January this year) was in Calcutta, but now he is back in Madras. This is the hot season, when foreign visitors are few, but even so, Mrs. Sofia de Mello from Germany was here and visitors from England and Australia.

There was the usual puja followed by distribution of prasada to the poor, after which the guests were invited to lunch by the Ashram.

In the afternoon a series of talks on the *Mahabharata* by Sri Purisai Murugesu Mudaliar (author of the article on 'Fire-Walking in South India' in our last issue) was inaugurated, with Sri R. K. Visvanathan, Reader in Physics at Annamalai University, presiding. At night there was a bhajan by Sri Jagadisa Iyer and party. Sri Om Sadhu's Tamil song 'Yar Jnani?' was distributed among the devotees.

BOMBAY

Shri Ramana Maharshi's teachings have a special appeal for the Christians according to Mr. Ian MacKinnon, Mg. Director of Glaxo Laboratories. Presiding over a function at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan this evening to celebrate the Mahanirvana of the Maharshi, he laid emphasis on the saintliness, essential simplicity of teaching and the serenity of appearance of the



Mr. Ian MacKinnon, Managing Director of Glaxo Laboratories speaking at the Bombay Aradhana celebrations.

Maharshi. The studies in Philosophy which Mr. MacKinnon had in Oxford have enabled him to understand the underlying unity of all religions of the world which perhaps had their origin to suit the fundamental needs of the different countries of the world.

Mr. M. S. Muthanna, General Manager, Bombay Telephones, who was the chief guest, brought home to the audience the essential simplicity of the Maharshi who shunned publicity but laid emphasis on meditation, solitude and self introspection.

Mrs. Mani Sahukar and Mr. Gopalacharya also addressed the audience bringing out the salient teachings of the Maharshi.

PALAKOLE

On 19-5-1966 morning at Sri Muralikrishna Ashram, Palakole; (West Godavari Dt.) aradhana of Alagammal (mother of Sri Bhagawan) and puja of Sri Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi was performed by Bhagavan devotee Sarraz Narasimharao.

In the evening a meeting of devotees was called and speeches delivered by Sri S. Nara-

simharao and Bhupathiraju Venkata Lakshminarasimharaju, on Bhagavan's teachings. The meeting came to a close with distribution of theertha prasadam of Bhagavan to the devotees present.

RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

Our Delhi Kendra is growing from strength to strength. Some of its members have already begun to think that it is time it had its own quarters. A subscription list has therefore been opened to this end, and the following donations have been received :

Dr. (Mrs.) Dharma Chatterjee	.. Rs. 1,000
Sri R. Venkataraman	.. Rs. 1,000
Anonymous Devotee	.. Rs. 1,000

Guru Pooja

Guru Pooja was celebrated at *Observatory Bungalow, Lodi Road, New Delhi*, (which please note, is now the address of the Kendra) on 8th April. After pooja, parayana and singing of songs by and on Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, Swami Asishji spoke on his reminiscences of Bhagavan. As an engineering student, in North India, he first came across a book on Ramana Maharshi which led him on a journey to Tirunvannamalai. He particularly recalled the benevolent and transforming look of Bhagavan in the Asram Hall, when he went there to take leave at the end of his stay.

Speaking of the individual soul's effort and destiny, Swamiji said that one should completely surrender to the grace of Guru. While work in the outer world went on, the inner Guru drew the individual soul towards the ultimate destiny, that is the Self. Thus the outer and inner pilgrimages merged together.

Prof. K. Swaminathan spoke of the joy of approaching and appreciating Bhagavan through the poems of Muruganar.

Sri C. Ramaswamy, Director-General of Observatories, quoting Eddington to prove the compatibility of science and spirituality, argued that a sage like Ramana was a super-scientist.

Unveiling of Bhagavan's Portrait

On 8th April 1966, a portrait of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was unveiled at the Madras Higher Secondary School, Lodi Road, New Delhi, by Sri M. Bhaktavatsalam, Chief Minister of Madras. Sri Bhaktavatsalam commended the idea of the Kendra in presenting Bhagavan's portrait to educational institutions where teachers and

pupils would gain equanimity and self-confidence by looking at the calm, bright face and recalling



Mr. M. Bhaktavatsalam, Chief Minister of Madras unveiled the portrait of Sri Bhagavan. Next to him is Prof. K. Swaminathan.

the life and teachings of Bhagavan. He also recounted his visits to Ramanasramam, one of which was in the company of Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

Other speakers were Prof. K. Swaminathan, Secretary, Ramana Kendra, Delhi, Dr. P. S. Lokanathan, Director-General, National Council of Applied Economic Research, and Shri R. Venkataraman, Deputy Controller-General of Defence Accounts.

SRI RAMANA BHAKTA SABHA, MADRAS

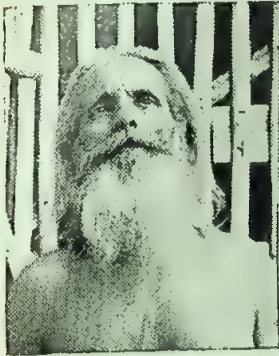
Guru Puja was celebrated on May 1, 1966 at 94, Mowbray's Road, Alwarpet. After Veda parayana, Sri M. P. Periasami Thooran, Chief Editor, Tamil Encyclopaedia, spoke on "clarity" as illustrated in the teachings of Bhagavan.

POONA

At Poona Sri Y. N. Athavale, an old devotee of Bhagavan, celebrated the Mahanirvana Day on Chaitra Vadya 13 at his Datta Mandir. In the morning there was Veda parayanam, puja and bhajan. In the evening Prof. Damle gave a talk. There was an appreciative audience of about 200 persons.

VISITORS

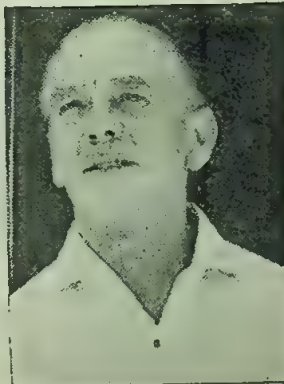
An interesting visitor has been Sri Shambhu Bhat, whose rather remarkable articles on 'The Sequence of the Upanishads' (Jan, 1965), 'Arunachala as Mandala' (April 1965) and 'Climbing Arunachala' (July 1965) readers will remember. We hope to have some literary fruit of his stay here.



Shambhu Bhat

We had a visit from Sri R. Venkataraman and his family. They are enthusiastic supporters of the Delhi Kendra and he gave us a heartening account of its condition — weekly meetings with some fifty to a hundred people attending and a programme of vedic chanting, talks, meditation and bhajan.

Despite the heat, the flow of foreign visitors has continued, the most conspicuous country of origin this time being Australia. Most of them were birds of passage. Only the Raphaels made a longer stay. Mrs. Raphael spent some weeks here as 'Willi Beets' four years ago, before there was a 'Mountain Path'. Now



Mr. Raphael

she has come back with her husband, Les. Both of them hope to come again.

Some of our American readers may be interested to hear that Prof. Eknath Easwaran, an occasional contributor to *The Mountain Path*, has started a new ashram of 'The Blue Mountain' Center of Meditation'



Mrs. Raphael

(Box 381, Berkeley, California) at: 285 Lee Street, Oakland, California. Informal evening talks are given, based on 'The Bhagavad Gita', the 'Teachings of the Buddha', the 'Upanishads' and the 'Yoga Sutra' of Patanjali. They are followed by a period of meditation.

MOUNTAIN PATH NEWS

The Mountain Path now has an agency for Germany and Austria also. This is the Altbudhistische Gemeinde of Utting am Ammersee. We are told by our friend and life-subscriber, Dr. P. J. Saher (by whom an article on the subject is due to appear in October) that the Gemeinde is already an important centre of Ramana bhaktas.

Our next issue is to be on SYMBOLISM, that of January 1967 on the QUESTION OF SUFFERING.

SKANDASHRAM

Skandashram, up on the sacred hill of Arunachala where Sri Bhagavan lived for seven years between leaving Virupaksha Cave, just below it, and taking up his abode at the site of the present Ashram, is a great attraction for visitors to the Ashram, especially to those from the West

who like it not only for the vibration of his Presence felt there, but also for the solitude and the pleasant shade afforded by the huge mango tree just behind it and for the fine clear water of the spring



Punyavachanam ceremony at Skandashram, after renovation. Above: Pooja at the inner shrine.



The ceremony of the sacred-thread in progress: Ladies go gay at such functions!

flowing perennially just beside it.

It was built out from a cave into its present form by the late Sri Kandaswami Gownder, an ardent devotee of Sri Maharshi, who levelled the ground with his own hands and built the basement whereon the superstructure was raised by the efforts of the late Perumalswami. After Sri Bhagavan came down to Sri Ramanasramam, not much attention was paid to Skandashram until 1940 when the grandson of the late Kandaswami Gownder carried out the necessary repairs.

Sri Sai Das, a resident of the Ashram, recently took up the task of renovating the Ashram and has completely white-washed it and repainted the woodwork. We are sure that the renovation will be appreciated by visitors.

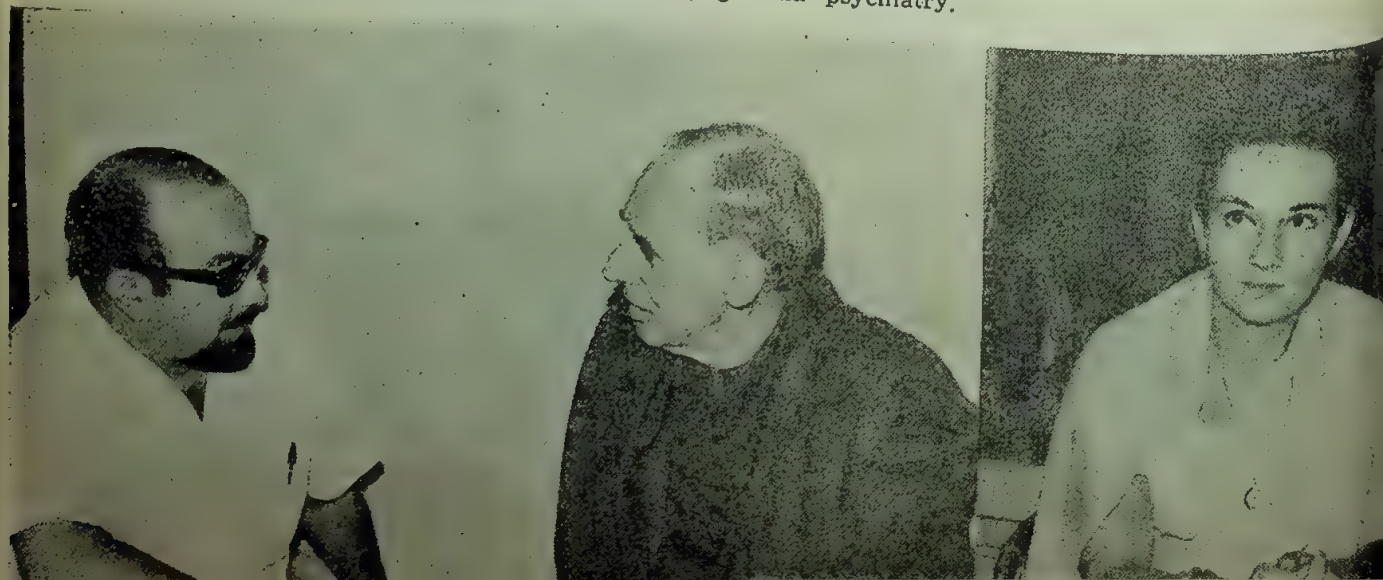
The traditional purification ceremony (punya-

vachanam) was performed on 4th June, when several devotees participated in the function.

A DEVOTED FAMILY

Sri Munagala Venkataramiah, who later became Sri Swami Ramanananda Saraswathi — the author of 'Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi', the translator of 'Kaivalya Navaneeta', 'Tripura Rahasya' etc., most of them published by the Ashram — was a long-standing devotee of Sri Maharshi from the very early days of the end of the last century. All his relations and descendants have carried on this devotion to Sri Maharshi and this has now become the tradition in their family. The sacred-thread ceremony of his sons was celebrated at the Ashram during the lifetime of Sri Maharshi and now the grandsons

Dr. and Mrs. Caycedo speaking with Mr. Osborne at the latter's residence in Ramana Nagar. Dr. Caycedo is cultural attache of Columbia in India. He is exploring the possibilities of building a bridge between yoga and psychiatry.





Grihapravesam of Smt. Kamakshi's new house. The peak of Arunachala is seen blessing the house and its residents!

in their turn have had their sacred-thread ceremony in the Ashram before the Samadhi of Sri Maharshi in the traditional orthodox style on Wednesday 25th May, 1966. Four young boys of the third generation in that line had the initiation into Brahmajnana that day and we wish these young brahmacharis all the best in the quest of the Infinite, as also all material prosperity. We invoke Sri Maharshi's blessings on them.

GRIHAPRAVESA

Occasion was also taken then for the daughter and son-in-law of Sri Swami Ramanananda Saraswathi to perform the grihapravesa of their house in Sri Ramana Nagar, very near the Ashram, in the grounds of which the body of the late Swami has been interred. When not occupied by them it is in the Ashram custody and we accommodate guests there. We wish Dr. O. Ramachandriah and Smt. Kamakshi Ramachandriah all happiness and may it be given them to reside near the Ashram after retirement from active service.

OBITUARY

JANAKI AMMAL

Nagaswami Iyer, the elder brother of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, passed away towards the end of the last century, sometime after Maharshi

left home for Tiruvannamalai. His widow, Janaki Ammal, lived thereafter with her parents for nearly a quarter of a century. She came to see Sri Maharshi in 1939 on the occasion of his Sashtiabdapoorthi (60th year). On that occasion, clad in the usual loincloth, Bhagavan jocularly remarked that he was very shy of appearing before his sister-in-law in the loincloth in which he used to do household chores at Madurai and Tiruchuli, and that, as if in punishment for the same, that self-same sister-in-law had made him only a loincloth-wearer and come to see him in that dress. From that time onwards Janaki Ammal had been living with her nephew, the present president of the Ashram. She breathed her last on Wednesday, 18th of May at the ripe old age of 87.

SANKARAMMAL

Widowed comparatively early in life and left with three children, Sankarammal came to see Bhagavan in 1936, having heard of him from the disciples of Sri Kulandai Swamikal of Madurai, an avaduta purusha, whom she was serving in Madurai. She came and settled down in the Ashram, in the year 1939 and left it very rarely to see her sons. She had been serving in the kitchen of the Ashram since then. She had learnt the works of Sri Maharshi in Tamil thoroughly and imparted them also to the children of the

present president of the Ashram and to other devotees.

Only once had she occasion to speak to Sri Maharshi, but that one occasion is worth recording. Once Bhagavan was repeating a verse in Tamil from 'Kaivalya Navaneeta' to the effect: "Praise be to the Guru, who for countless generations has been within me and guiding me and now has taken shape to initiate and grant me salvation." Thereafter Bhagavan left for the Goshala in accordance with his custom. Overhearing this verse from Bhagavan's lips, the next day Sankarammal approached Sri Bhagavan, for the first and last time in her life, and requested for upadesa, in reply to which Bhagavan quoted another verse from the same book, the gist of

which is: "O, Son, who have been wandering about like dust in a whirlwind, having forgotten your own self, know yourself and that is your support, and then you are free of all troubles. You asked and so I give this upadesa." Bhagavan then went back to the Old Hall. Sankarammal there after had no more doubts and nothing to ask.

For nearly 27 years Sankarammal served Sri Maharshi and the Ashram faithfully with little or no interval. She was ill for just a few days before she passed away at the age of 80 on Wednesday, 18th May at 7-30 a.m., a few hours before the sister-in-law of Bhagavan. Her cremation was largely attended by the devotees of the Ashram and the neighbourhood. May her soul rest in peace at the lotus feet of Sri Maharshi!

NOTICE

Sometimes we receive complaints of non-receipt of the journal rather late. Copies are posted to subscribers in the first week of January, April, July and October every year and should reach our subscribers in India by the second week at the latest.

We request readers to notify us of non-receipt before the end of the month of publication in the case of readers in India and within three months in the case of readers overseas. **Delayed complaints of non-receipt will not be attended to.**

Sometimes readers do not notify us of change of address in time and subsequently complain of non-receipt. We request readers to notify us of change of address so as to reach us one week ahead of the month of despatch. **Otherwise we cannot be responsible for loss in transit.**

Subscribers abroad are requested not to send the subscriptions in currency notes, but either by International Money Order, British Postal Order or cheques or draft on any bank in India, U.S.A. and U.K. They should be drawn in favour of **The Mountain Path** only.

Receipts for subscriptions are sent only with the journal and not separately.

Subscribers whose subscriptions end with the current issue for July are requested to renew for the next year to end with the issue for October 1967 at proportional rates, as this would greatly facilitate our accounting and also help bring the subscriptions in line with the year of the journal.

Our Agents receiving subscriptions will distribute copies direct to such subscribers, and **not from us.**

July 1, 1966.

V. GANESAN,
Managing Editor.

INTRODUCING...

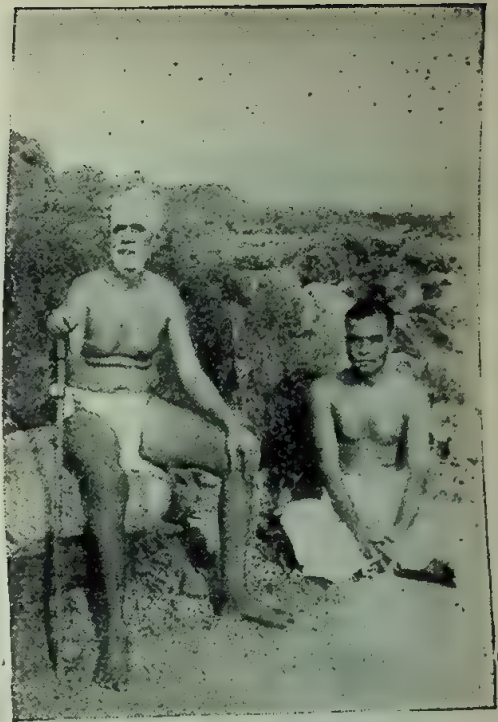
Sri T. P. Ramachandra Iyer

Sri T. P. Ramachandra Iyer whose native home is Tiruvannamalai itself, has been an earnest devotee of Sri Bhagavan from very early times. He hails from an ancient orthodox Brahmin family who for generations were well known in Tiruvannamalai for their traditional learning, discipline and piety. Endearingly known and called merely as 'TPR' by Sri Bhagavan and others, he has lived as one of Sri Bhagavan's 'family' here for decades. Unobtrusive by nature and silent in disposition, his has been an austere life of service and surrender at the lotus feet of Sri Bhagavan in whom he found his refuge and guide which was the haven of his desire. This he attributes to his purva-samskaras and the spiritual tradition of his ancestors.

Sri Bhagavan has narrated an incident of 1896, the year of his arrival in Tiruvannamalai, when he was staying in the precincts of Sri Arunachala Temple. TPR's grandfather, an elderly and pious person who used to visit him daily, one day, out of affection and regard, conducted him to his house and gave a ceremonial meal in the householder's manner. This was the only house which Sri Bhagavan entered to take biksha in the usual way after he had left his Madurai home. This information was given in full detail by Sri Maharshi himself.

Apart from the advantages of his traditional and parental discipline, TPR also received an English education which equipped him for the profession of law. This was far from his natural aptitudes or reflective bent of mind; however, in later years it proved a blessing in disguise as, from 1933 for over 10 years, some disgruntled persons embarked upon a spate of litigation against the Ashram and TPR unstintingly devoted himself and his time to defending the interest of the Ashram as an act of service till successful conclusion. This activity gave him still greater opportunities for close associations with Sri Bhagavan.

In his early days TPR ever felt a burning desire to come upon one who could truly harness his entire Being and guide him to greater strength. His learning and ancestral disciplines could not help understand the dilemma of life's activities — the pleasures of ordinary life and activity on the one hand and fear and misery of death seen all around on the other. He had come into contact with a few persons such as a Swami



*Sri T. P. Ramachandra Iyer with
Sri Bhagavan*

of the Ramakrishna Order, Dr. Annie Besant and later Sri Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni,¹ who voluntarily gave him a mantra for japa, which he never used. It was in this state of mind, prompted by a close relative who was already a permanent inmate of the Ashram, that he inducted himself to Sri Bhagavan's presence. He had seen Sri Bhagavan many a time as a boy, when Sri Bhagavan was in his Hill abodes, but then prompted by simple curiosity or youngster's desire for the sugar-candy or plantains freely distributed in his presence. He had questioned a relative of his such as whether Sri Bhagavan would read into his mind and see into his past, present and future and so on. His relative bade him go to the Swami and ask him all these.

Then in TPR's own words: "I entered Sri Bhagavan's hall in this frame of mind and looked at him. That is all. Sri Bhagavan very graciously looked at me in all expectancy as it were, and full of benign compassion — yes, he looked into the very core of my Being. He was sensing my entire Being. I fell flat in prostration to him with an experience as totally consuming as it was convincing. A discovery that 'He' whom I was hankering for, all these years, who could sway my entire Being and guide my

¹ For an article on whom see our issue of April, 1965, p. 81.



energy, was here. So great, yet so simple was this. I rose up and Sri Bhagavan smiled again and bade me be seated. All the emotions, thoughts, surging doubts were nowhere! I felt, I had found my refuge, which was the greatest fortune of my life. It was a conviction born of instant experience by His grace."

The present Ashram, almost from its inception has grown and developed to his knowledge and he has been actively associated with every branch of its growth, while maintaining close contact with Sri Bhagavan and depending on him for guidance. Few have had this privilege of moving with Sri Bhagavan for so many years with the ease and freedom of a devoted son to an affectionate parent. This gave him ample opportunities of receiving instruction, and guidance

directly or indirectly from Sri Bhagavan. In later years, it also led to his being helpful in interpreting Sri Bhagavan's utterances to some of the western devotees and those who did not know Tamil.

He has a precious collection of books, including all Sri Bhagavan's writings from their earliest stages in manuscript form to the revised printed editions. Most of them bear Sri Bhagavan's touch and some contain entries in his own hand, by way of addition, alteration and correction. TPR was also instrumental in seeing through the press a few editions of Sri Bhagavan's early works, particularly the 3rd edition of 'Sri Ramana Nool Thirattu' ('The Collected Works of Sri Maharshi' in Tamil).

It was during the period 1935 to 1945 that TPR had the best of his life at the Ashram, constantly benefiting from Sri Bhagavan's uplifting influence. Indeed, he felt by then that there could be nothing more important or useful for his future than to serve Sri Bhagavan till the end. When Sri Bhagavan's fatal physical affliction appeared for the first time, ending in an operation, and then recurred, TPR made up his mind and wound up his practice and interests in Madras. Thereafter he was fortunate enough to join the small band of attendants who looked after Sri Bhagavan's personal comforts and needs. During the whole two years the illness lasted, he stayed permanently with him, and the opportunities of service he had are treasured by him. He was helpfully assisting the doctors in attendance during the anxious months preceding the 14th April 1950, by his instructive guidance and meticulous attention to prescribed routines.

When asked to put in clear terms what he meant by the impact of Sri Bhagavan's grace on him, TPR said: "I am not left with any sense of want or void in internal strength. This is the direct result of a conviction instilled by experience by the Grace of Sri Bhagavan and it should be so with every one who has sought his Grace."

Like other old devotees of Sri Bhagavan, TPR shuns publicity. But any one coming in contact with him will immediately perceive how great his devotion to Sri Bhagavan is and how deep his understanding of his teaching. It is our good fortune that he resides here making himself available to all those who want to have a glimpse of what Sri Bhagavan IS and what the word 'Grace' can really mean!



Letters TO THE EDITOR

THE NEED FOR A GURU

To some of your ignorant readers your insistence on the inevitability of a guru seems to need explaining. May we ask for enlightenment?

When a sadhu looks into the eyes of his guru, what he sees (or does not see) is what is looking: which is the guru 'within'?

When he hears his guru's voice, what he hears (or does not hear) is what is listening: which is the guru 'within'?

When his guru touches him, what he feels (or does not feel) is what is sensorially experiencing: which is the guru 'within'?

When his guru speaks, what he cognises (or does not cognise) is what is cognising: which is the guru 'within'?

Is not this why there is no see-er, hearer, toucher, cogniser, no 'thing' seen, heard, felt, cognised, but I or 'I-I' manifesting? Which is the guru 'within'?

But where is the guru? I find all this when I look into the eyes of my cat. I would surely find it if I looked into your eyes or those of the Maharshi.

One of the greatest sages of China — Shen Hui, seventh Patriarch of Ch'an — said "Inseeing does not need a teacher. Based on such inseeing, a living being can attain buddhahood."

Wherein lies the discrepancy?

WEI WU WEI.

As the Maharshi often said, and as I explained in the last paragraph of my editorial of July 1964, the Guru is the Self in the heart, and it is possible for one who is sufficiently pure and concentrated to contact this inner Guru directly without the help of an outer Guru. In most cases, however, the influence of an outer Guru is necessary to lead one back to the Guru in the heart. Even Wei Wu Wei, if he had had the opportunity of looking into the eyes of the Maharshi, might

have found it different from looking into the eyes of a cat.

EDITOR.

THEORY AND PRACTICE

I should like to congratulate your excellent journal. Wishing it to go from success to success with each issue, scaling new peaks of achievement. There is absolutely no 'ego' on its pages.

But theoretically it is deceptively simple to pose the question, Who am I? Mount Everest looks very near. But to climb it is so difficult. Bhagavan has flown over its top in an aeroplane, which does not fall to every one's lot. Many people are carried away by academic discussion of his philosophy without any progress whatsoever in their daily lives. Armchair theorists with no elbow-grease propound their theories which cannot bring the truth an inch nearer to the hearts of their readers. I would therefore suggest

- (1) to open a column for questions on strictly practical aspects of Bhagavan's teaching, with editorial replies.
- (2) to invite articles for novices steeped in the ignorance of the material world.
- (3) to publish articles concerned with practical suggestions for sadhana, with individual experiences of various types.

In fact, I feel that less theory and more practice is what is needed.

SANANTHALER ALWAR,
Bombay.

I try to the best of my ability to combine theory and practice. In fact, some of our more intellectual readers were not too pleased with our April issue, because it leaned too far to the side of practice. Both are needed. In the 'letters to the editor' section any one is at liberty to ask

practical as well as theoretical questions, so no TOLERANCE new section is needed.

EDITOR.

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DESTINY

It is in no vein of criticism but with a view to getting a proper clarification that I am writing the following lines.

"Indeed, until the supreme, effortless state is attained, it is impossible for a man not to make effort. His own nature compels him to, just as Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita told Arjuna that his own nature would compel him to fight." (Editor's note on page 84 of the Sri Ramanashram edition of 'The Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi in his own words').

This explanation is given in a context where Bhagavan was discussing "effortless and choiceless awareness". In this connection, I am of the view (may be with limited understanding) that Bhagavan's reference was purely to mental effort (as we can tune our minds by effort) whereas you were citing Sri Krishna's advice to Arjuna to fight, which is only physical effort, which cannot be avoided but is forced on us by Nature.

In a previous reply to my letter asking for clarification on 'Destiny' you expressed the opinion that, though everything is preordained, effort is necessary. Do you mean physical or mental effort? If physical, where is the necessity for our effort, since everything is preordained, though for want of mental strength we entertain endless plans? My conclusion on reading Sri Bhagavan's works is that whatever is our destined lot will come about in its proper time whether we will it or not, by our effort on the spot, which cannot be avoided. Hence where is the scope for our willed effort? Please throw some light on my doubts.

C. SRIDHARA RAO,
Secunderabad.

The question of predestination is far too involved to answer in a few lines. Our issue of April 1967 will be largely devoted to it. However, it is impossible to draw a line between physical and mental effort. Physical effort is dictated by mental decision. And, under the symbolism of war, Sri Krishna was urging Arjuna to total spiritual effort. So long as you do not know what is predestined you have to make effort and, what is more, to make decisions.

EDITOR.

This letter is to express my appreciation for what is to me the finest edition so far of *The Mountain Path* (January, 1966). I have read every article through and although a few of them are too sentimental for my way of thinking, all are obviously sincere and contain that heartfelt spirit of understanding that is so sorely needed in the greedy world of today. Naturally the unenlightened hold many different views of the Master and state them accordingly, just as He gave guidance with various explanations, but those nearest the goal would seek only to join Him in the Silence.

There is, however, one discordant note in your Book Reviews which does not seem in keeping with the Maharshi's tolerant attitude towards the limited viewpoints of the "agnani", namely your sharp criticism of a Buddhist monk for what you term "traducing" other religions. If you will forgive my offering my viewpoint, it is that no one should be inhibited from exposing what he considers to be a weakness or obstacle to the search for the final Truth that is beyond intellect, even if he does represent the only major religion that has not contributed to "Man's inhumanity to man"

L. H. EWELS,
London.

I am encouraged by your appreciation of the January issue of our MOUNTAIN PATH.

When I spoke of Bhikkhu Khantipalo "traducing" other religions, I was referring to his book entitled "Tolerance" (one of the most intolerant books I have ever read) reviewed (not by me) in our issue of October 1964. In this book he cites cases of Hindu intolerance in such a way as to give the impression that they are a regular feature of Hinduism, whereas, by and large, it has been a remarkably tolerant religion — witness the continued existence (and not only existence but prosperity) of such defenceless minorities as the Jains, Parsis, Cochin Jews and Syrian Christians.

However, mere physical tolerance is not enough; there should be intellectual tolerance also: that is not merely allowing followers of other religions to live in peace but appreciating that their viewpoint, although different from one's own, may also be valid and their path lead to the goal. Hindus in general have this tolerance; Bhikkhu Khantipalo's book has not.

You claim that "no one should be inhibited from exposing what he considers to be a weak-

ness or obstacle to the search for the final Truth that is beyond intellect." But one may wrongly suppose something to be an obstacle to that search when it is only a different approach, and what one regards as "exposing it" may be regarded by its supporters as blasphemy or intolerance and provoke them to retaliate, thereby generating an atmosphere of hatred instead of goodwill between the religions.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating; the test of a religion is whether it can produce spiritual masters. If it can it is valid, because a wrong road cannot lead to the right goal. A religion that can produce a St. Francis or an Ibn Arabi or a Ramakrishna has the right teaching, whether it is one's own version of it or not. If one cannot appreciate it one can at least withhold judgment and maintain a respectful silence in the presence of the Holy.

This conception of intellectual tolerance is not new. The following quotation from the Buddhist Emperor Asoka in the 3rd Century B.C. (quoted from 'Religions of the World' by D. E. Harding, published by Heinemann) is a beautiful expression of it.

"His Sacred Majesty, the King, does reverence to men of all sects, whether ascetics or householders, by gifts and various forms of reverence ... The sects of other people all deserve reverence for one reason or another ... He who does reverence to his own sect, while disparaging the sects of others wholly from attachment to his own, with intent to enhance the glory of his own sect, in reality by such conduct inflicts the severest injury on his own sect. Concord is therefore meritorious, namely hearkening, and hearkening willingly, to the Law of Piety, as accepted by other people."

It is in the same spirit that our reviewer of the book which Phra Khantipalo misnamed 'Tolerance' remarks in the course of his review that the author "has performed such a singular disservice to the dhamma he aspires to serve."

EDITOR.

HALLUCINOGENIC DRUGS

Recently there has been great publicity in London about a hallucinogenic drug called L.S.D.

When my brother and some of his friends who take it say that it enlarges their consciousness and produces greater awareness I find it very difficult to argue with them, although I feel strongly that it does great harm. It is not addictive and does not appear to have any visible side

effects. I wondered whether you think taking these drugs does actually hinder any spiritual development, and if so, how and why?

I would also be interested to know whether you think it is dangerous to give them to people who are mentally and emotionally unstable, as the type of drug is quite widely used to increase 'rapport' between patient and psychiatrist. There seems to be much ignorance about the real effects of these drugs — could you throw any light on the subject?

A DEVOTEE,
London.

I am not a medical man and am therefore not qualified to speak about the effects of hallucinogenic drugs. I should welcome a reply from any medical expert with experience of them among our readers.

I can, however, say that even when visions and experiences such as the expansion of consciousness are, so to speak, legitimately come by, without the use of drugs, they have no real spiritual value and therefore Bhagavan always refused to bestow them on seekers, as some Masters have done. What is required is to strengthen and purify the mind to the point that it can hold its state of expanded consciousness and eliminated ego permanently. This can be done by constant effort, discipline and remembering. The effect of drugs would be rather to weaken than strengthen the mind, making it passive where it should be active, and therefore would be rather to impede than hasten Realization.

EDITOR.

PRAYERS (1)

Your April number is a real treasure chest. For me, the essence of it is a dialogue between Bodhichitta and Dr. Krishnaswami on the one hand and Qutbuddin on the other. (And how well you did to put these articles at the beginning!) Although I approached the dialogue from the side of Bodhichitta, I must admit that Qutbuddin has the best of it. What effect this will have on my life and quest I do not yet know.

WILLIAM FOSTER,
London.

PRAYERS (2)

Every article (in the April issue) is of absorbing interest and provides much food for thought. It is an excellent idea to devote a number to the

elaboration of a more or less well-defined theme in all its aspects. The April number centres around prayer in different forms and its wonderful efficacy in curing diseases, bodily and mental. More than twenty articles bear on this theme and, reading them, one is powerfully put in mind of Tennyson's statement that "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." These articles are enough to convince even the worst sceptic that "there is a Divinity that shapes our ends" and that there is a special Providence even in the fall of a sparrow.

Your editorial 'Higher Powers' is a brilliant article. It not only prepares the ground for the proper appreciation of the articles bearing on prayer and spiritual cures but also gives a beautiful summing up.

PROF. M. K. VENKATARAMANA IYER,
Manathattai.

* * *

EXPERIENCE (1)

While sitting in the old hall at the Ashram the first evening, so powerful were the vibrations that I felt my hair begin to stand on end. The great joy of it is that the enormous influence Bhagavan has on my spiritual life is so completely in harmony with my Zen training.

MRS. DELANCEY KAPLEAU,
Kamakura, Japan.

* * *

EXPERIENCE (2)

Thanks are past due for pleasure derived from the invaluable *Mountain Path* spiritual journal. Your adequate vocabulary and Bhagavan — BEing experience is rare and precious as it is transmitted to us through your written words. Many thanks to you for this.

Last spring with two friends I was enjoying a holiday in a Canadian house-boat: wash of waves were melodious beyond the walls about us. Mouna, inner Stillness and ecstasy emerged: the April 1965 *Mountain Path* had triggered bliss of Self for me during that sweet special time. Again heartfelt thanks are expressed for the precious *Mountain Path* magazine.

MADELINE MENDE,
Ecorse, Michigan.

POWERS

I cannot tell you how much benefit I continue to derive from your wonderful publication — it seems to get better and better all the time! Your Editorial, 'Higher Powers', in the April issue was particularly enlightening and inspiring to me. I am still studying the full contents of this issue and could write several pages of praise, but an air letter is limited for space, so I can only express this thought in a few lines, leaving the rest to be read between them.

DOROTHY C. DONATH,
Washington.

* * *

SILENCE

The April editorial was a treat to read and exudes fragrance and mellow wisdom of the highest order. Ennobling thoughts such as are embodied in the articles serve as a beacon light. I request that articles on Silence and its power should also find a place in your esteemed magazine. Silence also has great power. Nowadays people in every walk of life have become talkative and in incessant talking fritter away their energy.

SURINDER PAUL GUPTA,
Hoshiapur.

None should appreciate silence more than the followers of the Maharshi, whose essential teaching was in silence. However, articles about silence might become too talkative. Articles can correct the understanding, after which the true inner work must be done in silence.

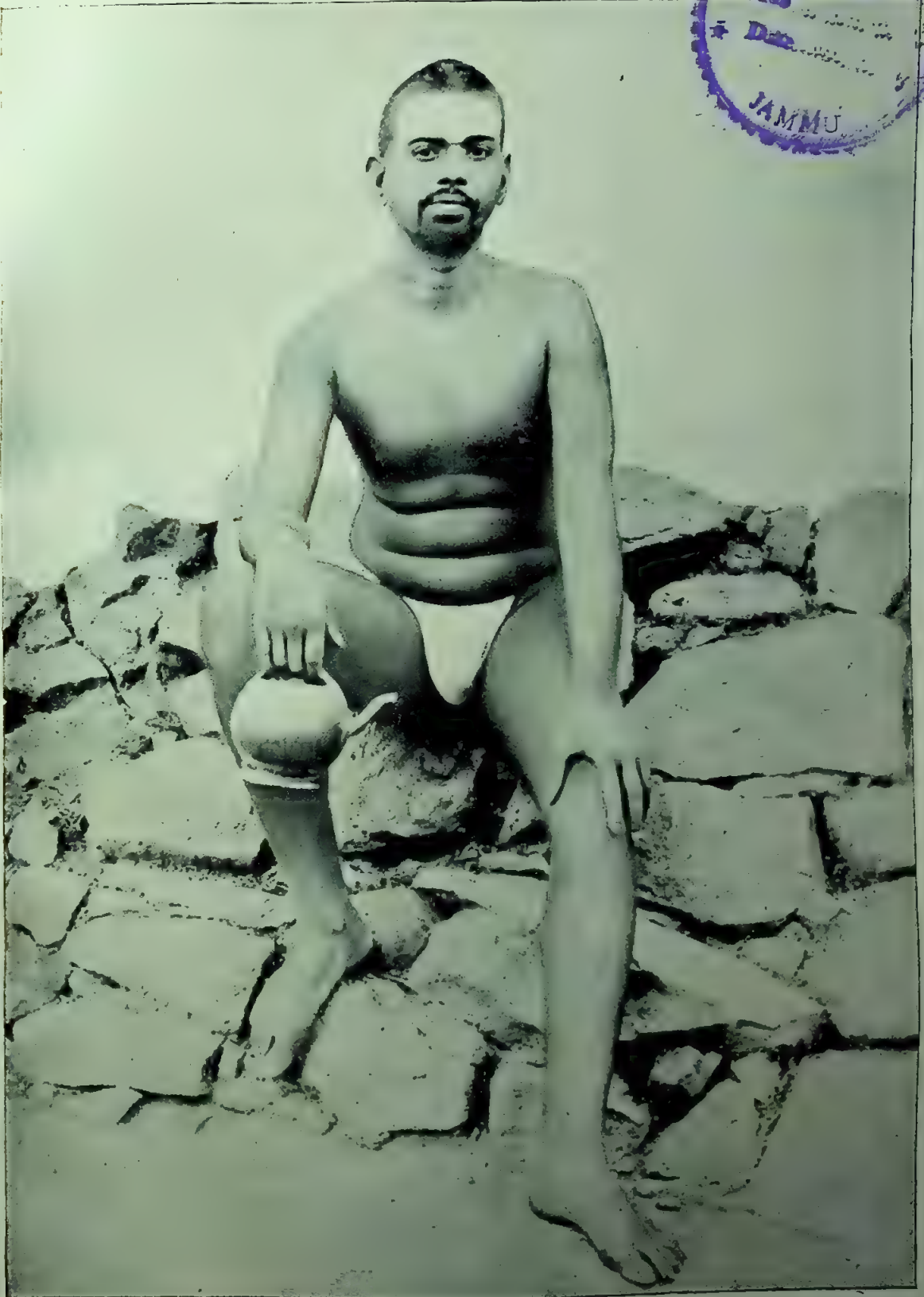
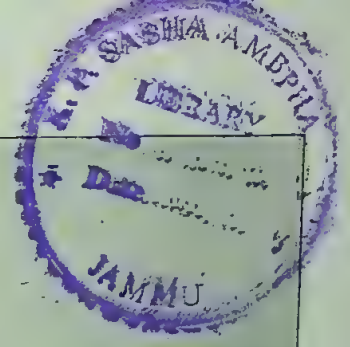
EDITOR.



CORRESPONDENCE NETWORK

David Teplitz invites letters from other *Mountain Path* readers to:

1040 F Los Gamos Road
San Rafael
California
USA.



SRI MAHARSHI — AT THE AGE OF 38.



THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

Editor: ARTHUR OSBORNE

VOL. III

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TALES OF MEANING

(EDITORIAL)

The whole world is a book of symbols insofar as physical things naturally reflect those of a higher plane. We do not have to make symbols, only to recognize them; and they are there whether we recognize them or not.

Apart from natural symbols, religions do, however, create myths or symbolical stories in which the truths of the Quest are dramatised. These are extremely varied. Many are tales of love, the quest of God for man or of the soul for God; and in these the soul may appear either male or female. There are many other themes also. The story in the Old Testament of how Abraham is ordered by God to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac is equivalent to Christ's saying that only he who gives up his life shall find it. The son is the individuality and only when it is offered up in full submission is it restored. Incidentally, to say that a story is symbolical does not mean that it is not historical. It may be, since history itself is symbolical. Whether it is or not is of secondary importance. There is urgent truth in the saying of Angelus Silesius: "Christ may be

born a thousand times in Bethlehem, but if he be not born anew in your own heart you remain eternally forlorn."

It often happens that the meaning of symbolical stories is lost. They remain like empty shells: their form still appeals but the contents are lost — or lost except to those few who can read the forgotten script. That is the case with Mediaeval European parables of the Quest that have degenerated into tales for children. For instance, the Sleeping Beauty obviously represents man's primordial beatific state. The knight who undertakes the quest to awaken her is the initiate. Or again, Snow White, described as "white as snow, red as blood and black as coal", is the human soul with the qualities (Hindu gunas) perfectly balanced in her. The evil step-mother, the mind or ego, tries to poison her. The dwarfs are the human faculties, stunted and capable of being corrupted but basically useful. The poisoned apple of which she takes a bite and which nearly kills her is mundane life. God is the Prince whose kiss restores her. And incidentally the conclusion to 'fairy tales'

which modern realists have made such game of, "and they lived happily ever after" is perfectly true, for the wedding symbolises the Mystic Union of the soul with God, which is the attainment of Beatitude.

Mallory's 'Morte D'Arthur' is a vast compendium of symbolism, Christian and pre-Christian. Its central theme is the quest of the Sangraal, the chalice which had held the blood of Christ. What else is this but the quest of Divine Grace? However, many other themes interweave. Even the same story can be told with different meanings. For instance, Lancelot's love for Guinevere can represent man's quest for the Divine Beauty in stories where he has to cross a razor-sharp bridge over a chasm to reach the castle where she is imprisoned and, out of his great love for her, does so with never a tremor. On the other hand, Guinevere represents the lure of the world when, in Mallory, Lancelot withdraws from the quest of the Sangraal out of longing for her.

There is much symbolism of the quest also in the Arabian Nights. Think of Sinbad's 'Old Man of the Sea', the vicious creature who clings to his back and drives him to get one useless thing after another, allowing him no rest. What better symbol of the ego? Another symbol of the ego that occurs in them is the adversary who, when defeated in open combat, constantly changes form and tries to slip away. It becomes a serpent and the champion an eagle to seize it, fire and he a raincloud to quench it, a fish and he a larger fish to devour it. The struggle sometimes ends with the adversary becoming a pomegranate and the champion a cock which eats it grain by grain, but one grain rolls under cover and is overlooked with the result that, although the champion has subdued the adversary, he has not completely destroyed it. This is the partial victory of the aspirant who attains a state of sanctity, with ego subdued, but not the final state of Realized Identity in which the ego is entirely destroyed. Another case will come up later where a single pomegranate seed has the implication of an irrevocable pledge, though in the opposite direction.

The truth of this story is clear to any aspirant who has experienced the cunning of the ego in assuming new forms. Strike it down in one form and it will slip away and quietly rise up in another. Renounce luxury and it will take pride in austerity. Strike down pride and it will creep in as pride in one's humility. Give up emulation and it will emulate others in lack of emulation. In Western stories the ego is often represented as a giant or a dragon whom the aspirant has to slay. It may sound fantastic to one who has never taken him on in single combat — not to one who has.

Many of the Arabian Nights stories are detailed, technical symbolism of the indirect type of path that was prevalent in the Middle Ages. Much Western symbolism is too. For that readers are referred to an article that appeared in one of our issues analysing the astrological symbolism of one of Shakespeare's plays.¹

Some Graeco-Roman mythology is transparent in meaning, some of it more abstruse. The later Roman writers seem to have been ignorant of it themselves, as we are of our fairy tales. One of the clearest myths is the marriage of Psyche, the human soul, with Cupid, the God of Love, which means the Love of God. He loves her but comes only by night and warns her against trying to see him. But her two elder sisters — unhappily married, jealous of her happiness — egg her on to kindle a light and see him. She does and as a result he abandons her and she has a long quest and many tribulations before she is raised to immortality and re-united with him. Divine Love does indeed first impregnate the aspiring soul in darkness and hidden bliss; she does not yet understand it or know the glory and splendour of it. The two wicked elder sisters are a common theme in mythology — Lear, Cinderella. They symbolise the mind, two-fold to show its preoccupation with diversity, married to mundane interests. Under the mind's prompting the soul loses its simple, implicit faith and begins to probe.

¹ *Hermetic Symbolism* by Sagittarius in our issue of April 1965.

Then follows the loss of the Beloved, the long quest, the endless tribulations, before the early bliss can be recaptured, stabilized now and immortal.

But the quest is not always successful. A man may banish the simple truth of intuition, preferring instead the diversity and flattery of the mind — the two sisters. Then the mind itself turns against him, but he finds that intuition has perished and cannot be revived. Then grief and madness drive him to his death. That is the tragedy of Lear.

The scholar-mystic-ascetic Simone Weil gives a brilliant interpretation of the myth of Persephone. The story is that Persephone, daughter of Demeter, the Earth-Mother, is stooping down to pick a narcissus flower in the fields when the earth opens and Pluto or Hades, Lord of the Underworld, emerges in his chariot and carries her off. Demeter complains to Zeus and because Persephone has refused to eat in the Underworld, refused, that is, to give her consent to residing there, Pluto has to release her. But before she leaves he manages to get her to eat a single pomegranate seed and this binds her to return for a part of every year. This has been interpreted superficially to symbolise the seasons of the year, but why should they need a symbol? Simone Weil probes deeper. This is the meaning she gives.

"Hades or Aidoneus, a name which means Invisible or Eternal, or the two at once, is presented sometimes as the brother of Zeus, sometimes as Zeus himself; for there is a subterranean Zeus. The name of Demeter very probably means Earth-Mother, and Demeter is identical with all those goddess mothers whose cult has so many analogies with the role played by the Virgin in the Catholic conception. The narcissus flower represents Narcissus, a being so beautiful that he could only be in love with himself. The only beauty which can be an object of love for itself, which can be its own object, is the divine beauty. The soul in quest of pleasure encounters the divine beauty which appears here below in the form of the beauty of the world, as a snare for the soul. By the power of this snare God seizes the soul in

spite of itself. This is the very same conception that we find in Plato's 'Phaedrus'. God must allow the soul to return to nature, but before that, by surprise and by strategy, He furtively gives it a pomegranate seed to eat. If the soul eats this it is captured for ever. The pomegranate seed is that consent which the soul gives to God almost without knowing it, and without admitting it to itself. This is an infinitely small thing among all the carnal inclinations of the soul, and nevertheless this decides its destiny for ever. This is the grain of mustard seed to which Christ compares the Kingdom of Heaven, the smallest of the seeds, but which later will become that tree wherein the birds of heaven alight."²

In commentary on this she makes the statement which may come as a surprise to many. "Notice that in the Gospels there is never, unless I am mistaken, question of a search for God by man. In all the parables it is the Christ who seeks men, or else the Father has them fetched by His messengers. Or again, a man finds the Kingdom of God as if by chance, and then, but only then, he sells all."³

A good deal of the symbolism of those parts of Hindu mythology which concern Arunachala is interpreted in the articles by our late contributor T. K. Sundaresa Iyer in his contributions of April and July 1964.⁴

I quote the following analysis of another fragment of Hindu mythology from a book of my own. "It is said that the devas and asuras, that is the gods and devils or good and evil spirits, wished to acquire amrita the nectar of immortality or elixir of life which was sunk in the ocean of milk. The only way to do so was to churn the ocean. They did this by rotating in it Mt. Meru, the holy and central mountain, one party pulling it one way and one the other. The first result was to bring up poison so terrible that the whole world might have perished

² *Intimations of Christianity Among the Ancient Greeks* by Simone Weil, p. 3. Routledge & Kegan Paul.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁴ *The Secrets of Arunachala and The Mythology of Arunachala.*

of it had not Siva swallowed it. It penetrated only as far as his throat, which turned blue from it, whence he is represented in iconography as blue-throated. After that the amrita was obtained. The devas wanted it all for themselves but the asuras naturally refused. Thereupon Vishnu assumed the form of a beautiful woman and the asuras were so infatuated that they forgot all about the amrita. There are more details and the story continues further, but this is enough for analysis. ...

"When a man undertakes the quest his higher and lower tendencies, devas and asuras, tug either way at his ego, rotating it back and forth and churning up his subconscious. The first result is to bring to the surface his lower possibilities, of which perhaps his conscious mind had hitherto been unaware. These threaten to destroy him but the Guru (or Self) takes them on himself; ... When finally the amrita is obtained it has to immortalize only the good, not the evil tendencies. This is the attainment of a beatific state by the aspirant. ... But in order to be destroyed they (the evil tendencies) must first be deluded; they must not want the amrita. Therefore Vishnu, the God of Preservation, God who holds the universe afloat despite its persistent downward tug to materialism, who bears the aspirant through all the dangers and hard-

ships of the quest, takes a form of illusion, the illusion of worldly values, and they are so infatuated that they forget about spiritual life, leaving it to the devas."⁵

It would be quite wrong to regard such stories in any religion, among any people, as folk tales. They undoubtedly have a wide vogue, perhaps owing to the dim, intuitive feeling of truth and appropriateness they inspire even in those who do not understand them in detail, but they are precise symbolical teaching which only one who knows it could compile.

If asked how much understanding of them there still is in India today and whether their meaning is tending to be lost, as happened with Graeco-Roman and Mediaeval Christian symbolical stories, I should have to say that my own limited experience, for what it is worth, has been that there is little interest in them, even among people of real spiritual purpose. There seems to be a general feeling that simpler paths are what we need today. Characteristically perhaps, the best exposition of them, or some parts of them, that I have come across is by a Westerner, that is in 'Hindu Polytheism' by Alain Danielou.⁶

⁵ *Buddhism and Christianity in the Light of Hinduism* by Arthur Osborne, p. 67-69. Rider & Co.

⁶ Published by Routledge & Kegan Paul.

JAYANTHI INVITATION

The 87th Birthday of BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI will be celebrated at His Shrine of Grace in the Ashram, on Thursday, the 29th December, 1966.

The readers of 'The Mountain Path' are invited to attend the celebration and partake of His munificent Grace.

PRESIDENT, SRI RAMANASRAMAM.

MEERA BAI AND BRIDAL MYSTICISM

By T. KRISHNAJI

T. Krishnaji specialises in the lives of Hindu saints and contributes articles on them to a number of journals. We published one on the Hindi poet-saint Tulsidas in January 1965, and one on Ramanuja, the founder of Visishtadvaita, in October the same year. We have one on the great Tamil poet-saint Thayumanavar in pickle for as far ahead as January 1968.

Bhakti marga, the devotional way to God-realisation, is the common heritage of people of all religions. Two sages, Narada and Sandilya, great devotees and exponents of the devotional school, define Bhakti as the form of Supreme Love. "Parama prema Rupa"; exemplified in the life of the gopis of Brindavan. Devotion is giving oneself to God in total surrender and absolute dedication. This pure love for the Divine implies detachment from the worldly life. The Sufi saint Nuri pleads:

"Lord; I have severed every thought from me
And died to selfhood, that I might be Thine.
How long, my heart's Beloved, I am spent.
I can be no more endure this banishment."

Rabia of Basra (717 A.D.) declares "I exist in God and am altogether His". Meera Bai was one such devotee who dedicated herself to God, that is to Krishna under the name of Giridhar Gopal, as His spouse and exemplified the way of devotion known as "bridal mysticism".

The devotee is depicted in the Bhagavata Mahatmya as feminine, and indeed devotion and intuitive awareness of God do come easily to women owing to their spirit of service and sacrifice. Tara, wife of Vali, and Mandodari, wife of Ravana, had the awareness that Sri Rama was Divine. Kunti and Draupadi had firm faith that their kinsman Sri Krishna was none but the Universal Lord. The Rishi Patnis and the Gopis of Vraja realised the Vedantic Truth in the

personality of Sri Krishna. The gopis of Vraja sang their intense love and devotion out of the awareness that Sri Krishna was not a mere child of Devaki but one who abides in all as Atma. They sang their agony of separation from Him in the language of bridal mysticism. Catherine of Siena (1347 A.D.) dedicated herself as the bride of Jesus. At the age of twelve she removed her beautiful hair on hearing that her parents had arranged for her betrothal. She "sang her joy when she met Him, and expressed her sorrow at separation from Him, seeking Him more intensely." Mechtild of Magdeburg (1207 — 1282 A.D.) sought God as her bridegroom. St. Theresa of Avila (1515-1582) a contemporary of Meera Bai, speaks of espousals and marriage, of bride in search of bridegroom. St. John of the Cross expresses spiritual life in the language of bridal mysticism. Ruysbroeck (1293—1381 A.D.) says that union with God is possible, indeed the goal of all religious life. The soul feels itself one with God though it knows by the same ineffable knowledge that difference between itself and Him continues and this may be called "spiritual nuptials". Nammalvar and Andal, Tamil Vaishnava Alwars and Manicka Vachagar, a Tamil Saivite saint, sang their rapturous devotion and spiritual longing in the language of bridal mysticism. Meera Bai was one such mystic who dedicated herself as the bride of God under the name of Giridhar Gopal, and sang her burning love and longing for Him.

Meera Bai belonged to the illustrious Rathod Rajput family of Jodhpur whose chivalry was a theme for ballads. Duda Rao of this family was a ruling chief of

Mewar. He had an only son, Ratan Singh, who was blessed with a daughter named Meera in about 1500 A.D. Some scholars are of the opinion that she lived between 1547 and 1614. Early in life Meera lost her father, but she was the darling of the royal household and particularly of her grandfather Duda Rao, who lavished all his love on her, telling her stories from the scriptures and singing devotional songs to her. Thus Meera was brought up to a devotional life.

While holding Meera in her arms one day, her mother saw a marriage procession pass by on the road. Meera saw the bridegroom dressed gaily and pestered her mother with the question, "Ma, where is my bridegroom?" In jest her mother told her that her bridegroom was God or Krishna in the form of Giridhar Gopal. Meera took these words for literal truth, and in her childish games began to serve Giridhar Gopal as her spouse.

Madhava Das, revered saint and guru of Brindavan, visited Duda Rao, and, observing the devout nature of the child, he blessed her. Meera observed the saint worship an idol of Giridhar Gopal and desired to possess it. The saint refused to part with it, but Meera persisted until at last he yielded. Another version has it that Duda Rao gave her a gold image of Giridhar Gopal. Her devotion to Giridhar Gopal was intense and as she grew older she sang her ardent devotion in the language of love, panting and longing for a vision of her Divine Spouse.

On reaching the age of sixteen Meera was married to Bhoj Raj of the Sisodaya Rajput clan of Chitor, eldest son of the Maharana Sangha. On the eve of her marriage, Meera confided to her mother that she dreamt that she was married to Sri Jagadish, Lord of the world. Bhagavan Krishna came as a bridegroom with a party. She sang:

"Mother I chose Gopal for my bridegroom.

I wore a veil of red and yellow colour.

Meera's Lord, Giridhar Gopal married her:

My hands are painted red with *medi*.

I chose the Lord Gopal. My bangles will be worn for ever."

Meera's faith was in her Divine Spouse, Giridhar Gopal, Lord Hari, the Eternal. Soon after her marriage, Meera was taken to Chitor, and her mother-in-law arranged for the customary worship at the shrine of the family goddess Durga. But Meera declared that she would worship no god or goddess but her Giridhar Gopal. The royal household was taken aback at her refusal to worship Durga. Though Bhoj Raj was also shocked at Meera's refusal to worship the family god, he appreciated her mood and arranged a separate shrine for Giridhar Gopal and allowed her freedom to worship and lead a religious life as she pleased. Many saints and sadhus visited her and participated in her bhajans. The famous cobbler saint Raidas visited her, and Meera refers to him as her Guru.

About 1527 her husband Bhoj Raj died and his younger brother Vikramjit became the Rana. . . . He violently disliked the sort of life Meera was leading, singing in the company of sadhus and bairagis in the palace. He thought that the prestige of the royal family suffered thereby and devised foul means to coerce her into giving up her religious life. Meera's fame as a saint spread. There is a rumour that the Emperor Akbar attended her Bhajana disguised as a sadhu. The Rana heard of this and was furious. He sent Meera a basket of deadly snakes, but they would do her no harm. Next he sent her a cup of poison and she dedicated it to God and then drank it with no ill effects. When his dastardly schemes failed, the Rana sent his sister Udu Bai and her maid Champa to wean Meera away from her religious life by persuasion. But they who came to deride and dissuade remained as her adherents, devotedly assisting in her religious activities. Frustrated in his schemes, the Rana told Meera that it would be better for her to drown herself than bring disgrace upon the family. In deference to his wish, Meera stole out at dead of night to a pond to throw herself in. When she was about to leap into the water, the Divine hand pulled her back and she heard a voice telling her to leave for Brindavan.



In the meantime, Meera had addressed a letter to Tulsidas¹ seeking his advice and he had written the famous lyric counselling her that kinsmen who have no devotion to God should be shunned as foes. Meera, a princess, dared to adopt the life of a beggar in pursuit of her beloved of Brindavan. Meera sings: "I have cast away my fear of the world. Meera's love for her Lord is fixed. I have planted the vine of love and irrigate it again and again with my tears." Nabhaji, the great hagiographer writes how Meera broke the ties of family and social life to worship Giridhar. Meera entrusted the image of Giridhar to her maid Champa and left Chitor to meet her cousin Jayamal, and thence to Mathura and Brindavan. Once a princess, she was now a beggar in quest of the flute player of Brindavan. She wandered in the woods of Brindavan singing

ecstatically her love for the Divine Beloved. She met many saints and sadhus. The disciples of Jiva Goswami explained to her that their master would not see her because he had taken a vow never to see a woman. She sent back a message that this was the first time she had heard that there was more than one male² in Brindavan. Hearing this Goswami himself came to her. After some time Meera followed the footsteps of Ranchodrai and reached Dwaraka.

¹ The famous poet saint about whom there is an article in our issue of January 1965, and a life of whom is reviewed in our issue of October 1965. (Editor).

² This is a play on words to which it is impossible to do justice in English. "Purusha" means male person, but also "Spirit"; therefore the implication is that Krishna is the only Divine Spirit or Male and all other beings are female towards Him. (Editor).

Meera remained in the shrine of her Beloved, Giridhar Gopal called Ranchodrai at Dwaraka. She sang her rapturous devotion in many lyrics, expressing her joy at his presence, pangs of separation at his absence, and her dreams and visions of her Beloved. The natural outpourings of her soul, inspired by deep devotion and expressed in her lyrics, assumed beauty of form and melody of expression. Meera had the natural grace of a princess and a culture derived from study of scriptures. In one of her lyrics she expresses her philosophy and longing :

"I dance and sing the glories of God Hari,
I study the Bhagavad Gita in my oratory
I am unconcerned with dhyana and
Jnana,
I commune with holy men and shall
taste
The sweet love of Giridhar Nagar, my
Lord."

She declares that holy company and God's name will guide a pilgrim safely on the path to God. She says that undifferentiated love for God merges the devotee and his devotion in Godhood. The ultimate message of the Gita finds its fulfilment in the lives of the gopis of Vraja and Meera Bai. Bridal mysticism is intense dedication to God transcending sensory life and as such it takes one to the acme of spiritual experience. Dr. Radhakamal Mukherjee observes : "Mysticism posits eternal values such as Truth, Beauty and Goodness, all infinites transcending any system of human relations, but it finds them actualized in concrete

human situations and experiences. To realise these ultimate values it often borrows its symbols and imageries from the intricacies of human love and aspiration and the Divine communion is sought to be translated in human love."

While Meera led an exalted life of ecstatic devotion to the Lord of Dwaraka, the political conditions of Chitor State deteriorated. Feeling remorse for his cruel conduct towards Meera, the Rana went to Dwaraka where he fell at her feet and implored her forgiveness. He begged her to return to Chitor but she told him that she bore no ill-will towards anyone, but would not leave Dwaraka without God's permission. One day in 1573 the evening service to God Ranchod Rai was celebrated and Meera sang rapturously. While Arati or waving of burning camphor was going on the two hands of the image of God as Ranchod Rai stretched out to Meera "as when the bridegroom receives his bride" and she was absorbed into the idol to the amazement of all. Soon an image of Meera was enshrined by the side of that of the God, and due worship is offered to her along with her Divine Spouse. Andal, the woman devotee and spouse of God in the form of Ranganatha had a similar spiritual experience and is therefore worshipped along with him in most of the shrines of Vishnu in South India. The holy name of Meera Bai is a household word throughout India, her devotional lyrics are sung throughout the country. Her memory is hallowed and is a blessing. May she inspire all to love God and to spiritualise their life. Her life is a glorious chapter in the religious history of India.

Your eye has not the strength to gaze at the blazing sun, but you can see its brilliance by looking at its reflection in water. Similarly the reflection of Absolute Being can be seen in this mirror of non-being. Non-being is the opposite of Being and reflects it. Know that this entire world is a mirror.

— MAHMUD SHABISTARI

THE RESURRECTION

By CORNELIA BAGAROTTI

Mary went to the tomb and finding the stone rolled back entered and found that the body of Christ was gone and only his burial cloths remained. At this moment Mary represented all humanity: all humanity that seeks in external form the eternal Spirit. When she met her Master outside the tomb she mistook him for a gardener and it was not until he had spoken to her that the full realisation of the resurrection entered her consciousness. Today most of mankind is like Mary for unless the Christ himself appear to them, or unless some personal experience prove to them the illusion of death, or unless inner illumination awaken them to their eternal life they cling to the body and are blind to the Spirit.

How difficult it is for them to achieve that inner certainty and knowledge of the Divine indwelling, to waken to the eternal and to leave behind all identification with or striving for the transitory. With each breath we breathe in the Spirit, with each movement we are sustained by it. It is nearer to us than our hand yet as invisible as thought, stronger than stone, more enduring than marble, more evanescent than dew. . . . it pervades all things. Like Mary we live in its midst yet know it not.

Her Master, The Christ, had lived with his disciples and followers for three years and with his townsmen and family for thirty years yet who gazed beneath the body and knew the Spirit that was the Christ? Who of us today knows himself to be Spirit and not body? Who renders unto Caesar that which belongs to Caesar and that which belongs to God to God? Who can say to him-

self at each moment: I am Spirit and all life is from God. Who can step out of his tomb and his burial cloths and be resurrected WHILE in the flesh? Who is beyond identification, limitation, fear and dependence upon the physical having a constant connection with his Divine Indwelling? This is the end of all spiritual striving in which God alone becomes the eternal reality. In the words of St. Paul "We die daily and live in Christ". For unless a man be born again he cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven. And unless he die to the world he cannot be born to the Spirit.

The life of one who lives in the eternal is transformed. Heretofore dedication, service, reverence, all encompassing love, faith, serenity, patience, detachment, humility, acceptance, courage, compassion, forgiveness, generosity were ideals not normal states of consciousness. But to one who, like St. Paul or the Disciples, actually experienced inwardly the reality of the resurrection all life is recreated anew.

Man is here on earth to evolve beyond isolated moments of perception or illumination and to fuse these moments into a continuum in God. Only then shall the heart know constant resurrection. What a weight of the world was rolled aside with that stone from the tomb, what glory of freedom and joy entered the aura of the earth when only the burial cloths remained but the Christ himself revealed the Divine Indwelling that is beyond death. Somehow each human heart no matter how filled with darkness and fear will in time achieve the reality of the resurrection.

As God has descended into man, so must man ascend to God, and in the Perfect Man, who is the true saint, Absolute Being which had descended from its absoluteness returns again into itself.

— ABDUL KARIM AL JILI

THE VISION OF WHOLENESS

By SIR GEORGE TREVELYAN

Sir George Trevelyan, whose second article on Shakespearean symbolism we are now publishing (the first was in July) is Warden of the Shropshire Adult College. He is widely known in England for his defence of natural agriculture and attacks on factory farming and the use of insecticides and fertilisers which, from a long term view, are threatening to ruin agriculture and destroy wild life in England. He is also known, as readers of these articles will see, for his profound understanding of symbolism and of Shakespeare's mastery of it.

Our first need in the world of today is to wake up to the oneness of life in its incredibly complex pattern. I find my mind constantly turning back to Shakespeare, because the whole truth is hidden allegorically in his plays. He hides in them the great truths which we need to know and which could transform our lives. They should be taken as myths which, behind the outer story, tell of the soul of man in its passage through the difficulties of the earth plane. 'The Merchant of Venice' is particularly appropriate to our times, dealing as it does with the problem of avarice. We are exploiting the earth rapaciously and inviting disaster by our greed. In 'The Merchant' we see the rich city of Venice representing the mundane level and the 'beautiful mountain' of Belmont representing the higher plane of awareness where the princess Portia lives. The personality, Bassanio, has to journey there to win and unite with the higher being in himself symbolised by Portia. In the lottery of the caskets he gambles rightly on true love and wins his lady. However, as in so many allegories of the quest, so soon as the aspirant has discovered his higher self they have to be separated and he has to go through trials and ordeals before he is fitted for the spiritual awakening symbolised by their permanent union. These trials often involve facing up to death in one form or another. In this case it is the threat of death hanging over the rich friend who has loaned Bassanio the money to come to Belmont

and win his lady. He has to return to the lower level of the rich city and take part in the trial of his friend who has forfeited a pound of flesh to the Jew. Taken symbolically, this is exactly what is happening to mankind today. The 'Jew', the grasping avarice in us, has us in its grip. "There is no power in Venice that can alter a decree established." That is to say that no earthly power can suspend the law of karma, the repercussions of our actions. We are caught in the toils of our own rapacity and retribution is upon us.

The Jews cries, "a sentence, come, prepare!" and is about to cut his pound of flesh "nearest the merchant's heart". Nothing, not even the Doge of Venice himself, can stop this happening. But the judge is the Higher Self who has come down from the level of the higher consciousness, from the eternal world to which the inner core of man belongs. She plays the whole company up to that point of death, pleads for mercy, and then draws them on, realizing that they have no way out within their thinking. They are in despair, calamity is upon them, but as the knife comes up to the breast of the merchant she halts it with the words, "Tarry a moment, there is something else." What is it that we have all forgotten? She goes on: "this bond doth give thee here no drop of blood," and the whole play turns on images of blood, the heart, gold, sun, kingship, light. Blood is the vehicle of the heart, gold is the organ of the sun, gold used homoeopathically is the curer of heart

disease. This triangle of gold and blood and sun runs through the whole play as a hidden allegorical theme. On the lower level of the rich city Shylock has treated the metal gold as something which can breed, as if it were alive; but Portia knows that gold is also a symbol for the light of the spiritual sun, the Christ power, the force of the Spirit. Therefore she is infinitely rich. Once you see 'The Merchant' in this way you see that it describes exactly the point our civilization has reached. Our motto should be, "Tarry a moment, there is something else." Portia in disguise departs with the words: "I pray you, know me when we meet again." Thus speaks the higher Self to each one of us.

Throughout all Shakespeare's plays we find the constantly recurring theme of Unity, Wholeness, broken up into disharmony by human greed and passions and harmony has to be consciously re-established on the path to Unity.

First is the primal unity: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God, By Him were all things made and without Him was not anything made that was made." From this Primal Unity, the Divine Imagination divides itself into a series of opposites or polarities, down and down into more and more divisions, each of them in balanced harmonious opposition. There are the great polarities of male and female, gravity and levity, and then lesser ones. All these work in dynamic balance to each other, down to the incredible proliferation which represents ecology as it was in the paradisaical world and should be in ours. Here we come right down to the smallest elemental forces working in the smallest plants or among the birds and insects. Each little thing is just being itself, doing its particular little task as part of the great whole. Behind each physical thing is the formative force or elemental being which is the force of God, the One Great Self. Everything has its wavelength or frequency and the whole world is made up of the complex balance of wavelengths. What we call Omniscient and

Omnipresent God is that ultimate Being who is present in every being and able to act at the same time on every wave-length. In all this complex pattern stands, as a central figure, the human organism. God made man after his own image, a creature of thought, emotion and will. Often people forget that there are two creations mentioned in the Bible. First God makes man divided into the polarity of male and female but above physical division, and only later He makes physical man and extracts from him the physical body of Eve. Man was there before physical creation because man is God's first archetypal idea. Man is the great experiment and spiritually was there from the beginning.

The Divine Imagination descends from this archetypal world into the world of material things. The world of birds and animals is part of the great ideal image of life, and man is in a true sense a symphony of the whole creative world. The whole is a unity in which the Divine Imagination has created one point in which Nature can consciously begin to think. Man is that part of Nature in which the living earth can look out into the cosmos and be conscious.

Not until a creature has been created who has gone through separation from the Divine and experienced death can there be the freedom of conscious return. It looks as though the purpose of creation is that the crown of it all should become a free being who can, through his own initiative, come back to the Divine. It is quite wrong for man to think that he is an accident on this planet and therefore free to exploit it or do what he likes with it. He is integrally part of the whole of nature and responsible for that which has been handed over to him. And what are we doing about it? We have totally forgotten that there is a plan at all. We think this world is ours to turn to our personal profit. The metanoia or change of thinking to which we are called now is that we turn around and re-establish the unity with the help of the divine forces. That is the point. We have not got to do it all ourselves, but we must rediscover that the

entire power-house is there and waiting for the invitation from us to pour in with healing force. We don't need to invent or bring about the unity. It is there ; it is a fact. God is everywhere and is working on every wave-length, including our own bodies, but the Divine Forces are standing back and will not go into action in any way until invoked. The unity could come with a rush as soon as it is rightly called on.

The first thing needed is recognition of this unity and realization that behind it is realm upon realm of light and creative energy waiting to pour through us. Many are beginning to wake up to this. Raynor Johnson in his fine books 'Watcher on the Hill' and 'The Imprisoned Splendour' gives quotations from quite ordinary folk who get the flash of what life is about. The mere fact that ordinary people are now getting such experiences is highly significant. Bucke in 'Cosmic Consciousness' describes the essence of these experiences of illumination. "Like a flash there is presented to his consciousness a clear conception, a vision in outline of the meaning and drift of the universe. He does not come to believe merely, but he sees and knows that the cosmos, which to the self-conscious mind seems made up of dead matter, is in fact far otherwise, is in very truth a living presence. He sees that the life which is in man is eternal, as all life is eternal, that the soul of man is as immortal as God is, that the universe is so built and ordered that without any peradventure all things work together for the good of each and all and that the foundation principle of the world is what we call 'Love' and that the happiness of every individual is, in the long run, absolutely certain. Especially does he obtain such a conception of the whole, or at least of an immense whole, as dwarfs conception, imagination or speculation, springing from or belonging to ordinary self-consciousness. Such a conception as makes the old attempts mentally to grasp the universe and its meaning petty and ridiculous." This is the wholeness of which we are part and for

which we are responsible. We have the power to re-establish the true harmony in the individual personality, in society and in nature.

We are called on to do nothing about it except to BE, simply to go on in our own lives, serving as we understand it the forces of light in our own circumstances. What matters is that we each of us from moment to moment dedicate the will to the forces of light so that, whatever devastating thing happens, we shall be ready for it and react imaginatively and positively towards it in the change. This is a picture of immeasurable hope. May I quote from a poem by Flecker :

Awake, awake the world is young
For all its weary years of thought,
The starkest fights must still be fought,
The most surprising songs be sung.

I think we have got to be prepared for the most surprising songs. And finally I will quote that wonderful passage from Fry's 'Sleep of Prisoners'. This is allegory itself, for these English prisoners are imprisoned in a dead church in the war ; they are locked in the empty church and they have a visionary experience in which one of them says :

The human heart can go to the lengths
of God.

Dark and cold we may be, but this
Is no winter now. The frozen misery
Of centuries breaks, cracks, begins to
move ;

The thunder is the thunder of the flocs,
The thaw, the flood, the upstart Spring.
Thank God our time is now when wrong
Comes up to face us everywhere,
Never to leave us till we take
The longest stride of soul men ever took.
Affairs are now soul-size.

The enterprise
Is exploration into God.
Where are you making for ? It takes
So many thousand years to wake,
But will you wake, for pity's sake ?

THE BASIC CHRISTIAN SYMBOL

By SAGITTARIUS

Christianity is based on a symbol.

When people argue whether Christ is the Son of God, whether he is the only son of God, whether all who say 'Our Father' are the sons of God, whether they are in the same sense in which Christ is or in some different sense, they are apt to forget that they are using a symbol. Every one knows what a son means literally: a separate person begotten by his father upon his mother and growing into manhood as his father's manhood declines, so as to be able to act as a replacement for his father. Also every Christian knows that that is not what he means when he speaks of Christ as the Son of God or when he himself addresses God as 'Father'. In other words he is using a symbol. He is saying: "Christ is to God as a son is to his father" or, more correctly, since it is the lower that symbolises the higher and not the higher the lower: "A son is to his father as Christ is to God." But no symbol is perfect or corresponds in all particulars, since physical realities can never wholly reflect spiritual, and therefore this symbol is incomplete, as the above definition of 'son' in the human sense of the word shows. To forget that one is using a symbol leads to woolly thinking and to argument about undefined terms.

When, for instance, a Muslim speaks of Christ as the 'Spirit of God' but denies that he was the 'Son of God' or that God ever can have a son, the correct Christian reply would be: "All right, you explain what you mean by 'Son of God' and I will explain what I mean by it." If this were done it might be found that the difference was more apparent than real.

On the other hand, to say that an expression is symbolical does not imply that it is meaningless. That would be quite a wrong deduction. Although the ultimate Truth is

One, the approaches to it vary. Islam concentrates more on the conception of the One:

Say He is God, the One,
God the Undifferentiated;
He never begot nor was He begotten;
He has no companions, He, the One

(Quran, sura CXII)

Christianity on the other hand concentrates on the Intermediary, the Word or Logos, the Power or Expression of God, the Son of God "without whom was not anything made that was made." In Hindu terminology, Islam concentrates on Siva and Christianity on Shakti. The active, dynamic aspect of God, that which creates and redeems, is symbolised in Hinduism by the Spouse of Siva and Mother of the universe, in Christianity by the Son of God. This does not imply pluralism: the Son is One with the Father, Shakti is One with Siva.

There have been Christian mystics who have been immersed in the symbolism of the Son, of the indwelling and redeeming Christ. To refer again to Hindu terminology, they correspond to the bhakta, the devotional saint. However the purest and most complete mystic, equivalent to the Hindu jnani, is apt to hold to Christ's saying 'I and my Father are One' and to claim that it is universal, that it is true of any who can realize its truth. I have tended to stress this attitude in some of my *Mountain Path* articles because it has been too much forgotten in Christendom; nevertheless it cannot be the general Christian attitude and the Church is therefore justified in ignoring (though not in condemning) it.

The general Christian attitude focuses attention rather on the path than the goal—and indeed Christ said "I am the Way". "I and my Father are One" may be ulti-

mate truth, but arguing whether it is or not does not help the ordinary practising Christian. What he needs is a way to the ultimate truth, whatever this may turn out to be ; and Christ is that way. Certainly Christ is the model of the perfect man that I could be if the Great Work had been completed, but also and more dynamically He is the infused Spirit of God that can enable me to complete the Work.

Ultimately, it may be said, God is One ; the Word or Christ is the same as God.

"Granted," the Christian admits ; "That is why I say 'Three Persons in One God'. But along the path I follow, for the purpose of bringing me to realization of this Oneness, it is the Intermediary, the Second Person, the Son of God to whom I must cling. Thus it is that the Christian comes through the Son to the Father and that "no man cometh to the Father save through the Son." It is not a vulgar historical claim that one teacher is authentic and all others, past and to come, are bound to be spurious.

THOUGHTS AND CLOUDS

By LIBRA

The clear expanse of sky is a symbol of pure Consciousness ; the clouds that pass across it are symbols of thought. That is why when you look steadily at a cloud it dissolves, just as a thought does.

Rolf Alexander has demonstrated this before vast audiences in Canada, the U.S.A. and Mexico, and accounts with photographs have appeared in the mass circulation dailies. He would indicate a small or medium cloud and gaze steadily at it and within about a minute, or two minutes at the most, it would dissolve — not merely change shape but completely fade out.

He claims to have learned the art in Tibet. I myself simply tried it and found that it worked. There is no particular technique. What is important is that you do not will the cloud to dissolve. Doing so would imply the interference of the self will and would impede the process, just as Joel Goldsmith used to warn that it would with spiritual healing. You simply look steadily and insistently. Many people can do it. Perhaps you can. I know at least one other person in Tiruvannamalai (from where I write) who can. It is the natural working of symbolism.

The power should not be over-used or it may deplete one's psychic strength. It may even leave one. I also don't agree with commercialising it or using it to boost oneself. However I have sometimes used it to convince a materialist or a sceptic. He will assert that mind cannot influence matter, so you point to a cloud and ask him whether that is matter.

"Of course," he replies.

"Then it couldn't be dissolved by mind, say by just looking at it ?"

"Of course not."

"Then watch it."

You gaze steadily and in a minute or two it has vanished.

"A coincidence," he says.

You may have to dissolve half a dozen or so clouds before he reluctantly admits that those you look at dissolve and those you don't don't. But it is worth doing to see the stupefaction on his face. Evidence is a thing the materialist hates ; and the scientist is quite unscientific in refusing to face it unless you force it on him.

SPIRITUAL ALCHEMY

By BRIAN COOPER

Brian Cooper is lecturer in liberal studies at the Lanchester College of Technology at Coventry. He has made a particular study of the mediaeval sciences of hermetism and alchemy which came to the surface at the time of the Renaissance. We are glad to welcome a contributor showing such a rare combination of solid erudition and intuitive understanding.

In all the major civilisations of the world, men in their desire to understand and formulate coherent truth about the universe as they have seen and experienced it, have sought that truth amid the secret workings of nature itself. The advent of the Hindu and Buddhist Tantras in the East and the consequent development of the Indian alchemical tradition, had its parallel in the Western world with the alchemical searchings of mediaeval and Renaissance Europe. In Europe this alchemical tradition, itself interwoven with astrology, manifested itself in various ways: the search for the 'philosopher's stone' the quest for the 'elixir of life'; the striving (for motives high and base) to transmute common metals into gold. The search was at one and the same time a 'scientific' one in which men enquired after the basic stuff of life, and a mystical one in which the same men sought the unifying spiritual principles underlying the outer fabric of the universe. This yearning to comprehend the 'labyrinth of the world' sprang from a fundamental concern (not destroyed in the West until comparatively recent times, indeed still showing signs of vitality) for the Oneness of Truth. Its advocates accepted that such truth was to be discovered as much amid the physical-chemical workings of the natural order created by the Deity, as amid the credal formulae and official theological orthodoxies presented by established ecclesiastical authority, itself divinely ordained.

The Western alchemical tradition sprang from the inheritance of the classical world and contact with Islamic civilisation. Every age has believed alchemy to be of ancient,

mysterious, even divine origin. In mediaeval Europe it was generally held that God himself had given the first Man, Adam, knowledge of alchemy. This secret knowledge, revealed via Raziél, the Angel of Mysteries, to Enoch (who came to be identified with Hermes, an Egyptian god, frequently referred to in alchemical literature as Hermes Trismegistus), went in turn via Abraham, Moses and Job to its subsequent practitioners. Other biblically-derived legends derive the origin of alchemy from the fallen angels or from the dreadful workshops of Tubalcain. Biblical sources for alchemy had an obvious appeal within the alchemical sub-culture of mediaeval Western Christendom, postulating as it did another biblical orthodoxy and a freedom from established beliefs, for certainly the 'nonconformism' of alchemy was a major source of its appeal to a civilisation dominated by the spiritual totalitarianism of the mediaeval Papacy. However, other sources were equally regarded and probably more so.

'Hermes Trismegistus', whose "works" enjoyed a vast circulation with Europe's development of printing, derived from a pseudo-legendary master of arts and sciences of ancient Egypt, and was variously regarded as a divine saviour-figure, or a great mortal to whom had been entrusted the knowledge of the secret ways of nature. By its very nature alchemy was hybrid, syncretic and eclectic, and nowhere more so than in the West, where mediaeval civilisation strove for its own distinctiveness so often by borrowing from other civilisations. Thus the mediaeval European alchemist drew upon Biblical, ancient Egyptian and classical

Graeco-Roman sources, as well as questing for himself. It has been written: "the philosopher's stone was said to have affinities with the mysteries of Genesis or those of the Apocalypse . . . was seen in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and the *Odyssey*, . . . was symbolised by Pandora's box, Jason's golden fleece, the rock of Sisyphus, Pythagoras' golden thigh, and other Hellenic myths."¹ Mediaeval Europe also inherited a respect for the metallurgist, with whose processes sacred rites were often associated. From the pre-Hellenic peoples of ancient Samothrace had come those Cabiric rites which were such a focus of mystery in the ancient Mediterranean world: from an early civilisation which had contributed much of knowledge in agriculture, metals and techniques of building and navigation, came also a mystical relationship between the working of metals and religion. The Cabiri were "theurgic priests of fire"; metallurgists were the "sons of fire"; metal-founders, glass-makers and others were often bound by the rules of a priestly caste; in the Arab and Western worlds alike, the working and research into chemical knowledge often took place in secret. The secrecy associated with classical and mediaeval attempts to manipulate the physical world intensified its religious connotations.

Alexandria, in late Roman and early Islamic times, was a focus of many springs of western alchemy. From Chaldea had come the planetary symbolism of metals; from Greek syncretism the yearning for purity and salvation so characteristic of later Christian alchemists; from Alexandria itself the search for salvation through illumination and knowledge, the Gnostic pathway; and, directly, the metallic art as being preoccupied with transmuting base metals into gold, with curative elixirs, and the attainment of perfection. With the coming of Islam, Alexandrian alchemy was diffused westwards, and in its scope and magnitude enormously enhanced by the scientific achievements of a civilisation stretching from the Middle East across North Africa to Granada in Spain. Alchemists of the stature of Avicenna (980—1036) fore-

shadowed western alchemists of the stature of Paracelsus. Certainly Avicenna engaged himself with the quest for the philosopher's stone; the legend that he had acquired immortality by his own elixir flowered after his death; his many works, such as *Summa Perfectionis*, *Ars Chimica* and *Porta Elementorum*, found their way steadily to France, England and Central Europe. From the 12th century Moslem scholar Averroes came a revival of Aristotle's concepts, while other Arab alchemists stressed the importance of spiritual discipline and ascetic pursuits for the understanding of the secret ways of nature. "The alchemy of felicity" (kimyâ es saâdah) sprang from non-conformism within Islam, especially the Sufi tradition. The Arab world gave to the West a panoply of chemical knowledge from which modern chemistry developed; it gave to mediaeval and Renaissance Europe many alchemical concepts and techniques. The 'culturing' of metals, mixing them with gold and putting them through processes in an attempt to achieve transmutation of the mixture; the careful chronicling of the various colour stages through which the mixture would have to pass; the desire for a catalyst to speed up the processes of nature, and the consequent need for the 'philosopher's stone'; the attempt to separate the 'spirit' of a substance from its material form; the accretion of elaborate religious rituals to accompany every stage in alchemical experiment; the notion that the transmutation of lower metals into gold was an allegory of the ascent of the personality of man from brute matter to pure spirit-soul; and finally the vision of the whole universe as a single cosmic system of inter-related elements, in which planets, metals, numbers and the souls of men were bound to the nexus of eternal truth;—such was the debt of western Europe to Islamic alchemy.

Spreading gradually throughout the Christian world, alchemy by the fifteenth century was being practised throughout Europe, with translations of Arabic works

¹ M. Caron and S. Hutin, *The Alchemists*, New York, 1961, p. 103.

and original western alchemical treatises in ever wider circulation. Early on, and certainly until the thirteenth century, alchemy was a "science of nature" and as such its practice could be reconciled with Catholic orthodoxy, but by the fifteenth century hermetic philosophy had become associated with heterodox beliefs claiming their own interpretation of traditional Christian mysteries. It is important to understand why alchemy had such a wide following in mediaeval and Reformation Europe. While it is true that alchemy was the chrysalis out of which the scientific study of chemistry developed in the West (in the same way as astronomy grew out of astrology), the alchemists only sought to understand the chemical-physical processes of nature as a means towards essentially religious knowledge about their world and destiny. Europe was attracted to alchemy because the Christian teaching of the divine Creation of the natural order stimulated curiosity about the details of the Creator's handiwork, and also because it offered another orthodoxy. The syncretic nature of Europe's alchemical inheritance meant that it comprised elements — 'pagan' classical and 'heathen' Muslim — unacceptable to official Christianity. Alchemy ranks along with the popular mystery cults, apocalyptic movements and heretical groups which formed a religious sub-culture within pre-Reformation Europe; in the Reformation and post-Reformation periods to the end of the seventeenth century, alchemy formed part of the radical Protestant spectrum, in its association with Cabalism, theosophy, freemasonry and even witchcraft. The seventeenth century was the high peak of alchemical questing in the West.

What was alchemy seeking to achieve? It sought to achieve, through the processes of the Magnum Opus, the attainment of the philosopher's stone, which physically and chemically would serve as the key to the understanding of matter, and in so doing would be able to be used to transmute base metals into gold, thus achieving the age-old dream of mankind; spiritually and mystically the whole process would also open up

to the initiate secret knowledge making possible union with the divine. Beyond this, it is very difficult in detail to understand what the alchemists were getting at or what they achieved. The reason is simple and obvious: they were so concerned to hide their secrets from the curious or the persecuting that they enveloped their methods and beliefs in highly coloured symbolic language. In the words of Huginus à Barmâ, "barring the profane, the Sages shall admit only the Elect to their sacred mysteries; from the moment they come into possession of this rare gift of divine Wisdom, they shall give thanks for it to the supreme Being, and shall place themselves beneath the banner of Harpocrates (god of silence)."² He who revealed the alchemist's secrets was counted accursed; the descriptions of the Magnum Opus are never expressed clearly and exactly in alchemical literature. The secrets of alchemy were carefully guarded by cabalistic use of numbers, secret keys, passwords, highly obscure symbolism of all kinds, the use of Greek or Arabic words, geometrical constructions and a wide range of illustrations including men, animals, cities, mythological divinities, and female figures.

Although the intentionally allegorical nature of many of the terms and signs used to denote metals, elements and chemical operations is understood, the complete meaning lies beyond our grasp. For example, the lion or bull stood for earth, the eagle for air, a fish for water, a salamander or dragon lying amid flames for fire — the four elements of mediaeval European science. Two beasts, serpents, birds, or figures of opposite sex symbolised the "fixed" and the "volatile", sulphur and mercury, for use in the Magnum Opus. The male always symbolised the fixed, sulphur; the female always the volatile, mercury. Among many other symbols, a circle stood for universal harmony, the unity of all matter; the sun represented gold; both the Magnum Opus and the philosopher's stone were designated by a lion, by a tree with

² *Ibid.* p. 133.

suns as fruit, and by a child-prince. Yet, in spite of modern man's ability, through the research of the historian, to decipher much of the actual operations involved in the chemical work of the alchemists, the actual meaning of it all still largely escapes us, because the operations of the Magnum Opus referred simultaneously to material phenomena and spiritual transformations.

It is therefore the spirituality and mystical concern of the western alchemist and hermeticist which is of prime importance, though of course the incidental contribution to the development of modern science was enormous. Here our purpose is to glimpse the meaning of "the spiritual alchemy". In the words of Becher in *Physica Subterranea*, true philosophers desire only knowledge. "False alchemists seek only to make gold; The former produce mere tinctures, sophistries, ineptitudes; the latter enquire after the principles of things." In short, alchemy at best was a search for spiritual salvation. In *Introduction to the Philosopher's Stone* the Rosicrucian alchemist Sperber wrote,

"It purifies and illuminates the soul and the body so that he who possesses it sees, as it in a mirror, all the celestial movements of the constellations and the influences of the stars; remaining in his chamber with the windows closed, he need not even contemplate the firmament."

Thus alchemy was another route to that ultimate wisdom which the astrologer sought. We can best gain insight into the spiritual alchemy by considering a few of its most significant exponents.

The mysterious Benedictine monk Basil Valentine, of the fifteenth century, according to tradition born in Erfurt, supposedly discovered various chemical processes including the distillation of alcohol, also antimony. His alchemical texts were widely published in Latin and French, and included *Azoth* (1613), *The Chemical Apocalypse* (1624), and the *Chemico-Philosophical Treatise*, which latter set forth the natural and supernatural principles of metals and minerals.

In his *Allegory of the Holy Trinity and the Philosopher's Stone*, Valentine wrote:

"Dear Christian lover of the blessed art: oh how brilliantly, how marvellously, the Holy Trinity has created the philosopher's stone! For God the Father is a spirit, yet he appears in the form of a man, as is written in Genesis; in like manner we must look upon the mercury of the philosophers as a body which is spirit. From God the Father was born Christ Jesus, his son, who is at once both man and God, and sinless. He need not have died, yet died of his own will and was resurrected in order that his brothers and sisters might be free of sin and live eternally in Him. Thus too, gold is without sin, ever the same and glorious, able to survive all trials, yet dies for its ailing and imperfect brothers and sisters; soon gloriously born anew, it delivers them, tinctures them for life eternal; it bestows upon them the perfection of the state of pure gold."³

Valentine was thus concerned to show the analogy linking the realm of things material to the realms of things human and divine. Matter in the first realm was composed of sulphur, mercury and salt; in the second realm was composed of body, spirit and soul; in the third realm God is composed of the three persons of the Trinity. Such a form of spiritual alchemy could be held within the framework of traditional Christian orthodoxy. Though we cannot know the full meaning it held for the initiated, we can glimpse that concern for harmony and totality of spiritual awareness characteristic of the true alchemist.

Philippus-Aureolus-Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, otherwise known as Paracelsus (1493-1541), was among the alchemists of the Reformation period who flouted traditional Church authority and made for himself a wide reputation as healer, alchemist, astrologer, traveller, and medical innovator. Hated by his opponents, Paracelsus developed 'hermetic medicine', which derived from alchemical-astrological theories about the 'correspondence' between soul, body and the exterior world, and behind a facade of much hoaxing and boasting, was both a scientist of great significance

³ *Ibid*, p. 154.

and religious thinker of nonconformist outlook. Notions of 'resurrection' and life within nature led him to the view that when an object or physical entity is destroyed, its "astral" form remains. In such attempts to relate Christian orthodoxy about the eternal nature of the soul to classical notions of 'spirit in matter', we see a Renaissance and Reformation religious outlook at work.

Jean-Baptiste van Helmont (1577-1644) was both an alchemist whose scientific researches were of enormous value to the development of the scientific tradition in the West and a religious mystic of profound spirituality. In 153 *Chymical Aphorisms* he wrote of alchemy: "this Science is the gift of God, which he giveth to whomsoever he pleaseth": it was both a system of chemistry to attain the philosopher's stone and the door into mystical understanding.

"This art requires the whole man, possesses him when found, and delivers him, when possessed, from all the tedious cares of this life, as esteeming little of all other things, and judging them of no value, and foreign to him."⁴

In *Ternary of Paradoxes* Helmont described the mystical visions which drove him to grapple with understanding the nature and inter-relationship of God, the soul and eternity.

"The body is like wax, whereupon the impression of the image of the Soul is imprinted, but the Soul hath her image and essential perfection from Him (God), whose stamp or similitude she wears."⁵

As a religious radical of his day, Van Helmont rejected prevailing Christian orthodoxy's division of the Soul into Intellect, Will and Memory, and instead saw these faculties, along with Love, related to the Mind, with all subject to the supreme and immortal Soul. For Helmont alchemy and astrology were alike valid means of perceiving the divine at work in the material world, and he wrote at length of the influence of the stars and planets upon mankind, their "radiations" being a form of the transmission of the divine will to mortal men.

All over seventeenth century Europe were many figures, often shadowy ones, whose range of religio-scientific interests embraced mysticism and alchemy, and often astrology too. They shared a belief in the Oneness of Truth, and alchemy was a focus of unity between knowledge about the natural world and knowledge about, or rather perceptive experience of, the nature of the soul. John Everard (c. 1575-c. 1645-50?), fashionable London preacher and Cambridge Doctor of Divinity, strove for a synthesis of alchemy and traditional Christian spirituality, came to an identification of "hidden knowledge" and "hidden mystery" with the mystery of Christ, and preached a mysticism which reflected the influence of Jacob Boehme. As translator of Hermes Trismegistus' *Divine Pymander*, he helped to further alchemy in England.

"There is contained in this book, that true philosophy, without which, it is impossible ever to attain to the height, and exactness of piety, and Religion ... Acknowledge thanks to, and admire, the Omnipotent Creator, Preserver, and Director of all these things."⁶

The concerns of the alchemist reached out into many aspects of European society in that age when the art most flowered. Spurred on by his understanding of the working of the divine amid the material, the alchemist — though pursuing his alchemy in secret so often — was mindful of the needs of society. Medicine, missionary endeavour, scriptural interpretation, religious controversy, freemasonry as an aid to the development of free institutions in authoritarian Catholic states, the coming of "the scientific revolution" — all owed much, directly and indirectly to the alchemist and his spiritual preoccupation. Although we are only at the very beginning of our understanding of "the spiritual

⁴ B. Van Helmont, 153 *Chymical Aphorisms*, London, 1689, p. 13. See my article in *Aryan Path*, Jan.-Feb. 1964, "Three Seventeenth-Century Mystics".

⁵ *Ternary of Paradoxes*, London, 1650, p. 131.

⁶ *Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus, His Divine Pymander*, . . . (and) . . . Asclepius, trans. J. Everard, London, 1657, "To the Reader", p. A9.

alchemy" and its contribution to western thought and civilisation, its essentially religious significance is clear.

Of course, there were many charlatans. Many were engaged in alchemy because they wanted to enlist demonic spirits, indulge in magical fantasies, dupe the credulous seekers after wealth with their formulae for the philosopher's stone, or ensnare gullible searchers for the elixir of life. Henry I of Bouillon, Cardinal de Rohan, Alphonse X of Castille and Henry IV of England were among princes duped by alchemical charlatans. The existence of so many tricksters heightened the need for secrecy and obscurity among true initiates of alchemy's scientific and spiritual knowledge.

Underlying all the work and thought of the true alchemist, mystic and astrologer was a vision of the inter-relatedness of all things, material and spiritual, human and divine, in one unified cosmos of truth under the divine guidance.

"We know that in the Elements, Water agrees with Earth in Coldness, Water with Air in Moistness, Air with Fire in Heat ... so Metals agree with Plants in their Unsensibleness, Plants with Animals in Growing, Animals with Man in Sense, Man with Angels in Understanding, Angels with God in Immortality. So also Stones and Metals agree with Plants, Plants with Animals, Animals with the Heavens, the

Heavens with the Intelligences, and those with the Divine Properties and Attributes, and with God himself. So the Divinity answers to the Mind, the Mind to the Understanding, the Understanding to the Intentions, the Intentions to the Representation, the Representation to the Receiving it, the Receiving to the Senses, and at last the Senses to the thing itself. For such is the binding together and continuity of Nature, that every Superior virtue doth disperse its beams through every Inferior thing, by a long and continued rank, flows even to the utmost. And the Inferiors are annexed to the Superiors by each other, that the Influence from the Head, the First Cause, as it were a certain Chain stretched out, proceedeth even to the very Lowest."⁷

This quotation from a mid-seventeenth century English alchemical and astrological work reveals that inter-sympathy throughout Creation which was the conviction of the alchemist, the unifying principle he sought to unravel, and the divine goal of his religious contemplation. In aiming simultaneously at the transfiguration of matter and the illumination of his own soul, the alchemist was seeking spiritual self-realisation, knowledge of the Ultimate, and union with the Deity. The concern of "spiritual alchemy" with the Oneness of Truth, now so sadly lost in the western world, speaks to our own time.

⁷ Hardwick Waren, *Magic and Astrology Vindicated*, London, 1651, pp. 10-11.

Question: Who is a pandit?

Mataji: He who has got rid of the idea that he is learned, he is a pandit — where what *can* be destroyed *has* been destroyed. He who has left off being a teacher and guide to others and, becoming a teacher unto himself, has taught himself so that nothing more remains to be learnt, he is a real and true pandit.

— MA SRI SRI ANADAMAYEE MA, *Ananda Varta*, May 1966, p. 7.

THE SYMBOLISM OF NUMBERS

By H. SEBASTIAN GUBBINS

Although much nonsense has been talked in the name of numerology, that does not alter the fact that numbers have a natural and inherent symbolism. The series of numbers does not begin with one, but with zero, which represents the Void, the Unmanifest, the primal Non-Being out of which both being and non-being emerge. By a natural symbolism, the zero is figured by a circle. This represents the metaphysical circle whose centre is everywhere and its circumference nowhere.

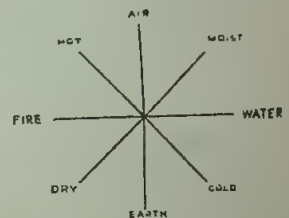
The first crystalization of zero is into One. The very name means God — the One Being. He who alone is. All creatures are from God ; all numbers are from the One. Every number is made up of ones. One is the substance of them as gold is of the jewellery made of it. It is a natural symbolism that we use a single straight line as the figure for one. The straight line is in itself an affirmation of oneness. The Sanskrit symbol for one १ is also interesting, however. It is a circle uncoiling and therefore represents the metaphysical zero of Non-Being opening out into the affirmation of Being.

But one is not in itself creative. First it polarises into the Divine Couple ; the complementarism of two — the yang and yin in China, Purusha and Prakriti in India, the polarity of active and passive, male and female, positive and negative, day and night, creation and dissolution, being and non-being, manifested and unmanifested. But this is a lower unmanifested existing together with its counterpart, the manifested, within the primal, total Unmanifested of the Zero, as Sri Krishna explains in the Gita.

Nevertheless, it is not two which is the dynamic and creative number, but three. Three is two and their uniter or union. It is therefore the number of the Word or the Son, without whom, as St. John says, was

not anything made of all that was made. Three is the number of the Hindu gunas, the stresses or tendencies which govern all creation.

Three is the number of creating, four of the created, of the world, of stabilisation. It is 'foursquare', the number of the square, which is the very picture of stability. In every way it has been taken to represent the stability of creation — the four seasons of the



year, the four yugas of a human cycle ; gold, silver, copper and iron, the four alchemical elements (fire, water, air, earth) and the qualities (hot, cold, moist, dry) which interlock with these as shown in the diagram each of the elements partaking of the qualities on either side of it, the four ages of man, (childhood, youth, maturity, age), the traditional four races of mankind (white, red, yellow, black), in India the four vedas, the four yugas, the four ashramas, the four castes (priestly, military, economic, labouring).

However, if one characteristic of physical manifestation is stability, another and opposite one is incompleteness and constant reaching out. In the former regard, four is the number of the square, in the latter of the cross, its arms forever reaching out. Historically the cross is associated with Christianity, but symbolically its significance is more universal and more ancient. As creation reaching out, it symbolises both aspiration and suffering. It has been used, with a number of variations, of which the Swastika is one, in many ancient civilisations.

Although four is the number of creation, it is not the number of man, for man is more

than the four elements; he is the four elements, with the quintessence (or essential fifth) in the centre. Therefore, five is his number, the number of substance with the spirit in the heart of it. The fifth point in the centre of the cross converts it from an image of blind reaching out to an

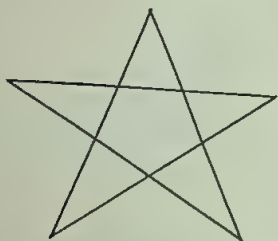
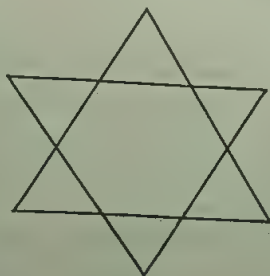


image of balanced manifestation from the heart. The five-pointed star is a traditional symbol for man. In some hermetic drawings it is actually humanised, a man being depicted with his head at the apex, his arms extended to the two upper points, and his legs to the two lower.

Six is again a number of stabilisation, but more profound than four, since it contains the quintessential five. Whereas four depicts merely expansion into manifestation in the four directions of space, six brings in the further two directions of up and down, implying the possibility of rising to higher and sinking to lower worlds. Therefore six is represented by the cross of three dimensions.

Another form of it is the six-pointed star, depicting the union of heaven and earth, spirit and body, yang and yin, Purusha and Prakriti, man and woman. Woman is traditionally represented by a triangle with the apex downwards. This marks the points of her body physically, higher and lower than the male upright triangle, thus reflecting woman's twofold relationship to man. Above the male triangle it represents the descent of Divine Grace on man; below it represents woman bound to the body more than man is by her physical functions, and therefore inferior to man. The six-pointed star



symbolises the union of the two where the lower triangle of aspiration moves upwards into the descending one of Grace. Thus it is used to depict the perfect man.

Just as five completes four by addition of the quintessence, so seven completes six, but six is the four directions of space plus the additional two of up and down, so seven is a more universal perfection than five. Five represents the completion of the human state, seven the total perfection of cosmic being. From one viewpoint, therefore, seven is the perfect number. Paintings of Christ and the apostles sometimes show the apostles in pairs, making six groups with Christ in the centre as the seventh.

Eight is a number of stabilised manifestation, like four. When the intermediary points are considered, it is the number of the directions of space. It is the combined number of elements and qualities. Nine is taken as the number of the circumference of the circle and is therefore, in its own way, a perfection. It is also the last single digit, which gives it finality. It has the peculiar integrity that the digits in every multiple of it add up to itself (18, 27, 36 etc.). The digits of any number to which it is added add up to the same as before (e.g. $24 = 2 + 4 = 6$; $24 + 9 = 33 = 3 + 3 = 6$), so that the nine remains invisible.

Ten being the first double number, has a sort of primordality like one, and indeed its digits, 1 and 0, add up to one. It is complete as being the summation of the first four numbers, $1 + 2 + 3 + 4$, which are the basis of creation. It is for this reason that it is taken as the opening of a new series, nine being the last single digit.

This has been so among all peoples, but there have been some ancient peoples who have taken twelve instead of ten as their cyclic number. Twelve has indeed a peculiar complexity and completeness. Astrologically, each of the four elements (fire, water, air, earth) must be manifested according to each of the three modes (cardinal, fixed and mutable); and therefore there must be

twelve signs of the zodiac, three for each element. In many other cases twelve has been the number of a complete cycle of manifestation or a complete symbolical group — the twelve tribes of Israel, the twelve tables of the Law, the twelve apostles of Christ, the twelve knights of the Round Table, peers of Charlemagne, even months of the year.

It is partly for historical reasons that thirteen is considered an unlucky number:

because there were thirteen at the Last Supper when Christ was betrayed. But in itself also it is inauspicious since it breaks the cyclic perfection of twelve.

Thus it will be seen that numbers have an inherent meaning and importance. It is because their symbolism is natural to them that it is found among many disconnected ancient peoples. It did not need to be invented but only recognised. Today it is largely forgotten.

CONSCIOUSNESS

By T. P. RAMACHANDRA IYER *

My special subject in college was philosophy and so I had some knowledge of both Eastern and Western systems of thought and to some extent I was conscious of this. My first appearance in the Old Hall set me free from any such ridiculous feeling. When I entered the Hall there was a discussion going on about the nature of self and of consciousness and unconsciousness. Book learning being fresh in my mind, I began to express what I had read about the various grades of consciousness in Western systems, and particularly mentioned and explained the super-conscious and sub-conscious. Sri Bhagavan listened and reacted sharply and remarked: "What is is only Consciousness. It is only with reference to something that is that you can postulate a super or sub state to it. Only to that which exists can you postulate higher or lower grades; you never talk of adding to or subtracting from a non-existent. Consciousness is Existence and every living being agrees that it exists; so that which IS is consciousness. Consciousness is Truth; other postulations of it are the creation of

ignorance, clouding the mind but appealing to the intellect. Peel off the postulations, ignore the supras and subs and be as you are. You ARE: that is the truth known even to a child. Truth is simple and direct. Being always IS, it knows no variation. That which IS — Consciousness — has neither appearance nor disappearance. Therefore, what exists is Consciousness, call it by any name, Self, God, Atman, Brahman. . . ."

I did not only hear the words of Bhagavan but experienced something else also.

I felt and experienced my nature, dived deep into my consciousness and swam in the ocean of Bliss. I fell prostrate before Bhagavan and cried aloud within myself: "O Bhagavan! my Master! dispeller of my darkness! obeisance to you! Accept me as your servant!" How can I speak of the joy and bliss I experienced that day, which still surges in me by the Grace of the Master, Sri Ramana Sat-Guru!

* For an introduction to whom see our issue for July '66, pp. 299-300.

“ WE WILL SHOW THEM OUR SIGNS ”

By ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN

The Qur'an, like the Tao-Te-King, often speaks of a people or community when, read with more understanding, it refers to the individual. For instance, the Tao-Te-King asserts that when the Emperor refrains from ruling there is peace and prosperity in the Empire; and the Qur'an repeatedly enjoins not to make mischief in the land. The meaning in both cases is the same: that a man's faculties (the 'people') should be allowed to function simply, spontaneously, naturally, and that his mind or ego (the 'ruler') introduces disharmony among them when it starts to interfere and 'make mischief', harnessing them to some ambition or twisting them to imitation of some pattern that is not natural to them.

Living 'naturally' does not imply licentiousness or animal self-indulgence. On the contrary, that is itself a perversion created by the mind. It implies a life of noble simplicity.

Again, it says in the Qur'an that Allah does not change the state of a people until they first change what is in themselves. The Qur'an is an intensely symbolical book. Again and again one is brought up against sayings like this that need to be pondered over. In this case also the 'people' represent the 'community' of faculties, impressions, urges that go to make up what we call an individual. So the implication is that God does not change a man's circumstances until he first changes 'what is in himself', that is his nature or his attitude towards his circumstances. This carries the profound message that a man's environment reflects his nature.

This is a very hard thing to say. He who says it lays himself open to the accusation of smugness. "It is all right for you to say that because you are in comfortable circumstances, but what about all those who are destitute or bereaved or suffering, those who

have no work or financial security or have been thrown into concentration camps?' It certainly is a hard thing to say, and it does not mean crudely and simply that good people succeed in life and bad people suffer. One's own character and destiny are so complicated that it is much if one can understand them; how then can one hope to understand at all fully those of others, about whom one has only comparatively external information? One complication that rules out a crude application of the theory is that what appears to be success is by no means the same as contentment—as many successful people commit suicide as unsuccessful, as many wealthy as indigent. Another is that human happiness itself is not the purpose of life. Another that happiness may even grow out of suffering if the suffering has awakened a man's nobler qualities. Collections have been published of letters written by inmates of Nazi concentration camps and it is remarkable how many of them speak of finding not only a meaning in life but a happiness and serenity which they had never experienced in the free but superficial life they knew formerly. Indeed, from a profounder viewpoint, it may have been the camp guards who were more to be pitied than the prisoners.

Also, of course, it is to be remembered that people in the same family or working in the same office may have very different environments. One of two brothers may be bullied by his elder brother, miserable at school, but consoled by the protective love of his mother, while the other may be happy and successful among his school friends but embittered at home by his mother's favouritism towards his younger brother. The environment of a person is not something that can be measured by statistics but is mental and emotional as well as physical.

Taking all this into consideration, it does remain true that a man's environment reflects his nature as a mirror does his face. From this it results naturally that Allah does not change it until he changes first what is in himself. This has a bearing on what I wrote in an earlier article on petitionary prayer.¹ It is no use scowling into a mirror and praying that it will reflect a smile; as long as you scowl it will continue to reflect a scowl. Still less helpful is it to be aggrieved that the mirror shows bitterness. The aggrieved look will make the reflection still less amiable. But as soon as you change what is in yourself — malice to sympathy, jealousy to friendliness, suspicion to appreciation — the change will be reflected back at you from the mirror. And in your life also. A man who is full of malice will be subject to the malice of circumstances; one who is open and trusting will meet with unexpected help; one who is at war with the world will find the world at war with him.

Again it must be repeated that this cannot be taken crudely and simply. It does not mean that a just man can never be cheated or an honest man exploited. Nevertheless it does remain true in a general way; and in specific cases it is often self-evident.

This carries the implication that a man's environment is not merely something passive, like a reflection in a mirror, but also

an active influence which, by changing as he changes, can provide a means for his spiritual progress. The whole universe manifests the Attributes of God, while His Essence remains unchanged. So it is also with a man and his environment. "We will show them Our signs on the horizons and in themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth."² This is the same promise or threat as that referred to earlier: God will not change your state until you change first what is in yourself; He will continue to manifest His signs outwardly and in yourself until you recognize their truth. Your whole life is a book of signs if you could read them aright. A mean and timid man will find himself insecure in a threatening environment; and inwardly too the sicknesses he suffers from will be those of deficiency; but let him muster up courage to fulfil his obligations generously and both health and circumstances will change accordingly. The correspondence may not always be as obvious as that, but it often is; and in more subtle ways the signs are always there on the horizons and in ourselves. But too often our self-will prevents us from seeing them. And then we pray for the mirror of life to change its expression and rail against blind fate when it does not. It is we who are blind.

¹ See *The Mountain Path* for April 1966.

² *Qur'an*, XLI, 53.

VERSES FROM THE "GARLAND OF GURU'S SAYINGS"

Translated by PROF. K. SWAMINATHAN from the Tamil of SRI MURUGANAR

336 Seeing in all oneself,
Humbler than the humblest,
Supremely meek,
Through meekness the Supreme
Achieves supremacy.

338 Unheroic chaff
Floats atop the flood.
Pearls sink down
And at the bottom rest.
Men are made high or low
By what they are, not where.

RENÉ GUÉNON, RESTORER OF TRADITIONAL SYMBOLISM IN THE WEST

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

Traditional wisdom is taught more in symbols than in verbal formulations. This is in the natural order of things, because words can only hint at that which lies beyond them and are almost inevitably twisted to point in the wrong direction, whereas symbols are natural reflections on a physical plane of truths from a higher plane. They do not have to be created but only recognised, and they exist whether we recognise them or not. For instance, a seed containing all the possibilities of branches, leaves, flowers and fruit really does symbolize the original, mute intuition of truth in the heart, out of which all later experiences evolve. It symbolises also the germ that passes on from this life to the next, where it will sprout into a new life in the soil of its new environment.

At the time of the Renaissance, Europe turned away from traditional wisdom in pursuit of "the things of this world". The understanding of symbolism was lost and was replaced by academic philosophy and experimental science. So far as concerns theoretical materialism and rationalism, this trend reached its apogee in the nineteenth century. There are many signs that a contrary trend — both above and below rationalism — has now set in; and perhaps the most spectacular of them is the discovery by materialist science itself that there is no matter. Physically and symbolically we no longer stand on the solid ground of materialism: physically we stand on a whirling mass of electrons, dashing around in empty space, symbolically on the quicksands of new occultisms, the sub-conscious mind, dangerous drugs, unbridled individualism, nuclear destruction. But today those who seek to rise above the ground-floor level of rationalism and materialism, have redis-

covered the ancient paths "from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light, from death to Immortality."¹ Mysticism is no longer merely a freak phenomenon but also a path that can be followed.

The one person who was instrumental more than any other in the restoration of traditional wisdom to the West was René Guénon. Far from founding any school of his own, he kept himself in the background while proclaiming the eternal, universal Truth underlying all religions. He poured forth a stream of books and articles in the twenties and thirties of this century in which, with brilliant lucidity, vast erudition and scathing contempt for all who differed with him, he attacked modern civilisation and revealed traditional wisdom. Above all, he explained what is meant by Self-Realization and how it differs from spasmodic mystical trances and psychic experiences. He taught that the Divine or Realized State is the natural fulfilment of man and that there are paths to it and guides to show the paths. And in book after book, article after article, he restored the ancient language of symbolism. The writer of this article was one of many who took him as the prophet of our times — unpopular to the multitudes, as all prophets have been, but divinely inspired for this purpose. Certainly he educated us into the truths of tradition and symbolism of which the academic education of our time had lost the key. The result of his work may have been less spectacular than that of many self-styled teachers, but it had a far firmer foundation, it bred up a new type of intellectual seeker in the West, prepared to set forth on the quest wherever a path and a

¹ *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 1, 3, 28.

guide could be found. There can be no automatic safeguard against the dangers that beset every path, the symbolical enemies, the wild beasts of the senses, the pitfalls of delusion, but at least the followers of Guénon went forth with a sound route-map, that is a knowledge of doctrinal theory such as Western seekers had not had for centuries back. It was no guarantee against being led into danger by false guides, as some of its possessors, in their youthful enthusiasm, had believed it would be, but even so it was much.

A peculiar feature about Guénon's expositions was that, although he himself was a Muslim following a Sufi path, he expounded doctrine almost entirely in terms of Hinduism. His first book, which contained in germ all the others, was "*A General Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*", and perhaps his most influential was "*Man and His Becoming According to the Vedanta*". He considered the Hindu concepts the most complete intellectually, and he thoroughly familiarised his readers with them.

In his recognition of all religions he was no syncretist. While prepared to show how the same fundamental Truth underlay all religions, and how parallel concepts appeared in them, he insisted no less on their difference in the contingent domain of theology, ethics, ritual and social application. He taught that each religion is a living, organic whole and that attempts to combine features of one with features of another would create a monstrosity, like trying to combine parts of a horse, a cow and a dog in the same body. Therefore, while demanding an intellectual recognition of all religions he was scathing in his denunciation of any attempt to fuse them. He even wrote a book against one such attempt which was enjoying popularity in his day.

His books are less necessary today, because they have done their work so well that the essence of their teaching pervades the atmosphere of the quest even among those

Western intellectuals who do not approach it through them; also because translations of scriptures and other works of genuine guidance from one religion or another are now available. Nevertheless, they still have a wide appeal both in the original French and in English translations. And the periodical which served as his mouthpiece, *Etudes Traditionnelles*, is still published by his followers. Indeed, series of his articles on various aspects of symbolism have been put together in book form and are also republished.

And what of his mistakes? Men who, in their youthful impetuosity, would have staked their lives on his infallibility now find his mistakes to be colossal. He declared that Buddhism was a heresy and a false religion and that Hindus do not believe in reincarnation. He asserted that Ramana Maharshi was not a guru, without troubling to go and see him in order to form an opinion, and ignoring a letter sent with the Maharshi's explicit approval by one of the Maharshi's disciples, stating that he was. Unaware that all Hindu gurus since Ramakrishna have been waiving the demands of orthodoxy, he taught that rigid orthodoxy was still necessary whatever path one might follow in whatever religion. The best way is to openly admit his mistakes. To try to gloss them over would only lead to further criticism. It is best to say quite simply: "Yes, he strayed into quite colossal errors, but his mistakes were factual, whereas his truth was principal. (to use a word he coined). He knew that there is a Goal and there are paths to the Goal, he taught the eternity and unanimity and universality of Truth, he understood the language of symbols pointing to Truth like fingers to the moon. All this he expounded with force and clarity. But for him, many who now follow a path would either be bogged down in modern materialism or have fallen victim to some freak esoterism. Let us recognize his errors and reject them, but let us recognize the tremendous service he performed and honour him for it".

UNIVERSAL SYMBOLISM

By J. J. DE REEDE

Dr. Mees of Holland, known also as 'Sadhu Ekarasa', was often here in Bhagavan's lifetime. He made a special study of symbolism, on which he published a weighty volume. He is no longer living, but the author of the following article, who was then a young pupil of his, is now an authority on symbolism in his own right.

So much has been said and written on symbols that it might prove useful to reflect for a moment on the meaning of the word itself. We then find that the word comes from the Greek, *sum-balloo*, denoting: I throw together, the throwing together. What is being thrown together in the symbol is, on the one hand, its form, its literal value, and on the other hand, the life which it leads in us, understood or misunderstood, in the conscious or in the unconscious. As such it is different from a sign, although there are instances when signs can become symbols. When the sign becomes inseparably fused with inner life, it stops being merely significant, it gets additional value, it becomes symbolic.

The opposite of the symbolic is the diabolic. This word finds its origin in *dia-balloo*, meaning: I throw apart, or: to throw apart. If the sign and its life get thrown apart, separated, nothing remains but the empty form, the dead skin. And if an estrangement arises between the sign and what it originally signified, (as is unavoidable in the process of cultivation: slowly the bullock loses its significance in association with agriculture), then the sign ceases even to be merely significant.

But it is the first part of the process — or rather degeneration—which concerns us here. The opposite of degeneration is generation, and the root of that word we also find in that old scripture, Genesis, containing some illustrative material on the subject. For there the opposing symbolic and diabolic are laid down in the commandment concerning the forbidden fruit, "for in the day that

thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die", as against: "And the serpent said unto the woman 'Ye shall not surely die. . . '."

The fruit is eaten and the culprits do not die literally. Since it seems unlikely that the story wants to draw attention to some mistake on the part of Almighty, we must seek for another explanation. The following becomes evident: the commandment is meant to be understood symbolically and its breach is punished on the same level with a symbolic death. The serpent here represents the voice of literalism and materialism. It is always or nearly always in close contact with the material element, Earth; its uplift plays a great part in all culture.

In Genesis it is not uplifted. On the contrary, its voice is listened to and its advice taken. Then symbolic death results. The meaning is separated from the commandment and the misdoers die a death in that they are driven out from paradise, from the peace and Bliss which would have been theirs if they had stuck to the path of Genesis, the path of becoming (constituting the six "Days" of Genesis I, resulting in the seventh "Day" of Genesis II).

It will not be superfluous to go through the relations between the five lower elements and their corresponding aspect in man. The Element Earth (in the Panchabhutas, *Prithvi*) represents the physical body of man and his material interest in life. The Element Water — the element-in-motion *par excellence* is used to denote the fleeting, flowing element in man: his emotional life (in the Panchabhutas, *Ap*). The third Element is that of Fire (*Tejas*) and is symboli-

cally connected with the mental life in man whence his urges and passions are supposed to spring — and even today we speak about the solar plexus near the digestive organs and the thinking faculty of man. The fourth Element is that of Air (Vayu) and as in Latin (spiritus = air, but also spirit) the close relationship between the airy and the spiritual can be clearly perceived. (Atman = to breathe, but also soul, spirit.) The spiritual would include the inspiration (literally: the intake of air and intuition — inner intuition). Presiding over the four elements, we are told, is the quintessential faculty of insight (inner sight). It is interesting to note that the "quintessence" of a matter, that is its centre and core, really means the "fifth element".

Groups of five, sometimes with the two additional spheres added, we find in all traditions. For Christians the pre-Christian symbol of the Man on the Cross became all-important. The four points of the cross symbolize the four Elements, while the quintessence is the Man crucified on it. The initials INRI written above the head have been explained by some to represent the four Elements once more: Iam (Water), Nur (Fire), Ruach (Air) and Iabeshah (Earth). Christ is often designated as a "Ruler of the Elements". The Egyptians had (to take only one example) the pyramids in which the same principle was laid down, with the four corners as the four Elements and the top of the structure, pointing upwards, as the Quintessence. In Hinduism we have the Panchabhutas which underlie the Kosas (body-sheaths), Yamas and Niyamas, the Panchavati etc. The "Body-sheaths" or Kosas have reference to the five "Elements" in man as follows: 1. the Annamayakosa represents the material and physical in man; 2. the Pranamayakosa stands for the fleeting, emotional function; 3. the Manomayakosa is connected with the mental faculty; 4. the Vijnanamayakosa is the spiritual aspect of man's "aspirations" and 5. the Anandamayakosa represents the sheath of Bliss, the result of insight.

We find the same connection also in the five Yamas: 1. Ahimsa, non-harming, non-hurting refers purely to the physical sphere; 2. Brahmacharya, chastity, finds its true source in the emotional life, and is thus connected with the Element Water; 3. Asteya, or non-stealing refers to the mental faculty — for is it not the mind which, in guiding the hand, is the thief rather than that hand? 4. Satya, truthfulness, is at heart a spiritual quality and 5. Aparigraha, non-coveting, is the result of insight into the whole.

People are said to benefit from meditation near the Panchavati, the five trees harmoniously grown into one. Once the symbolic implications of the values of each of the trees are understood, the idea makes sense. The connection of the five trees with the several aspects of man's being is said to be as follows: 1. the Amalaka or nelli: the Element Earth. 2. the Udumbar or fig: the emotional (including the erotic also evident in Roman Tradition). 3. the Margosa, the fiery neem, for the fiery mind. 4. the Vata (or banyan) is, with its air roots, symbolic of the spiritual Element Air. 5. the Asvattha or bodhi tree: the faculty of insight. It is interesting to note that the root "bodhi" is related to "Budhi" as found in Buddha, the "Enlightened".

The additional two spheres referred to above are the Moon-Sphere and the Sun-Sphere, symbolic of the creative power of Consciousness as a reflection of Being or Reality. These symbols have been taken from nature, where the moon is a mirror of the sun reflecting the light of that source of life.

Examples of methodical attempts at integration in which groups of seven are found, are perhaps even more numerous and are also found all over the world.

Hindu ritual has probably been the least corrupted and the aim of integration is easily discernible, once the importance given to the Elements is understood.

The ritual of puja is an example. 1. Nai-vedya, the offering of food which after-

wards comes back in the form of Prasad sustains the body, the Element Earth. 2. Pushpa, the flowers, having grown from water, symbolize that Element and, as the procreative part of a plant they are especially connected with man's procreative and emotional life. 3. Gandha, the sandal paste, gives off a nice smell. Smell is (in the group of the five senses) symbolic of the mental faculty. It is, in fact, the "animal mind" or the mind of the animal, for beasts rely largely on their smell. The sandal paste giving off a nice smell, is believed to cool and soothe the (fiery) animal mind, and serves a symbolic purpose. 4. Dhupa, the incense, rises up in the spiritual Element, Air, when burning. With the act of offering the incense, expression is given to a desire, namely, that the mental faculty may be raised up into the realm of the

spirit. 5. Dipa, as *light* is that which gives the onlooker a clearer view of the image of the Godhead, symbolically representing some sort of inner sight. To complete the group of seven we may add the kumkum placed on the forehead, on the spot between the brows where the Yoga teachings have it that the seat of Consciousness is situated, the creative power of the Moon-Sphere. Above it the holy ashes are smeared. Since they are the only matter which cannot be destroyed and are truly avinasi, or avikarya, they symbolize the indestructible in man, that which remains after everything has been burned up — including himself. The ashes are therefore a reminder of death and the Eternal at the same time and constitute a true symbol of Advaita, the ultimate Oneness.

DAY AND NIGHT

By A. RAO

World and dissolution, day and night,
Both are eternally, although to sight
They seem to alternate. Life and death
Are the twin phases of a single breath
Of That-which-is, That which underlies
The self that lives and then reluctant dies,
Not knowing whence or whither. To out-turned gaze
World with its intricate in-weaving maze
Of ever-varied forms forever is.
Turn inward and its woven harmonies
Are gone with him that saw them. Nought remains
That eye can see or thought (though it contains
All things) can comprehend, only the vast
Unknowable whereon the worlds float past
Like foam-flakes on the Ocean. How shall mind
Pierce to what was before it, or how find
The Womb that gave it birth? No aggregate
Of thoughts and feelings, no conglomerate
Of forms endures; and yet, though figments pass,
"Life like a dome of many-coloured glass"
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,"
And all things are and are not endlessly.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE MUDRAS IN INDIAN CLASSICAL DANCING

By GITA SHARMA

The author of this article is herself an accomplished exponent of Bharata Natya. She is a student of the renowned instructor Ellappa Mudaliar of Kancheepuram. In the photograph her right hand forms the mudra 'Sikhara' or 'peak' denoting Purusha, both as 'Spirit' and as 'male'; her left hand forms the mudra 'mrigasirsa' or 'deer's head', denoting woman, among other things. The whole pose represents Siva-Shakti where the right half of the body is Siva and the left half Parvati.

Among the classical styles of the Indian dance comprising Kathak (North India), Kathakali (Kerala), Manipuri (Assam and Bengal), Oddissi (Orissa), Bharatanatyam, nowadays performed in the South, represents the purest form of the tradition.

The Bharatanatyam dance has its roots in the most ancient dance traditions found in Vedic hymns for which the earliest recorded evidence is in the "Natya Sastra" of Bharata. The "Natya Sastra" treats of Drama, Dancing, the Stage, Music, Aesthetics, Elocution, Rhetoric and Grammar; particular techniques, movements and gestures of the dance, attributes of dancers and in fact everything appertaining to the theatrical profession. The origin of the dance is as follows :

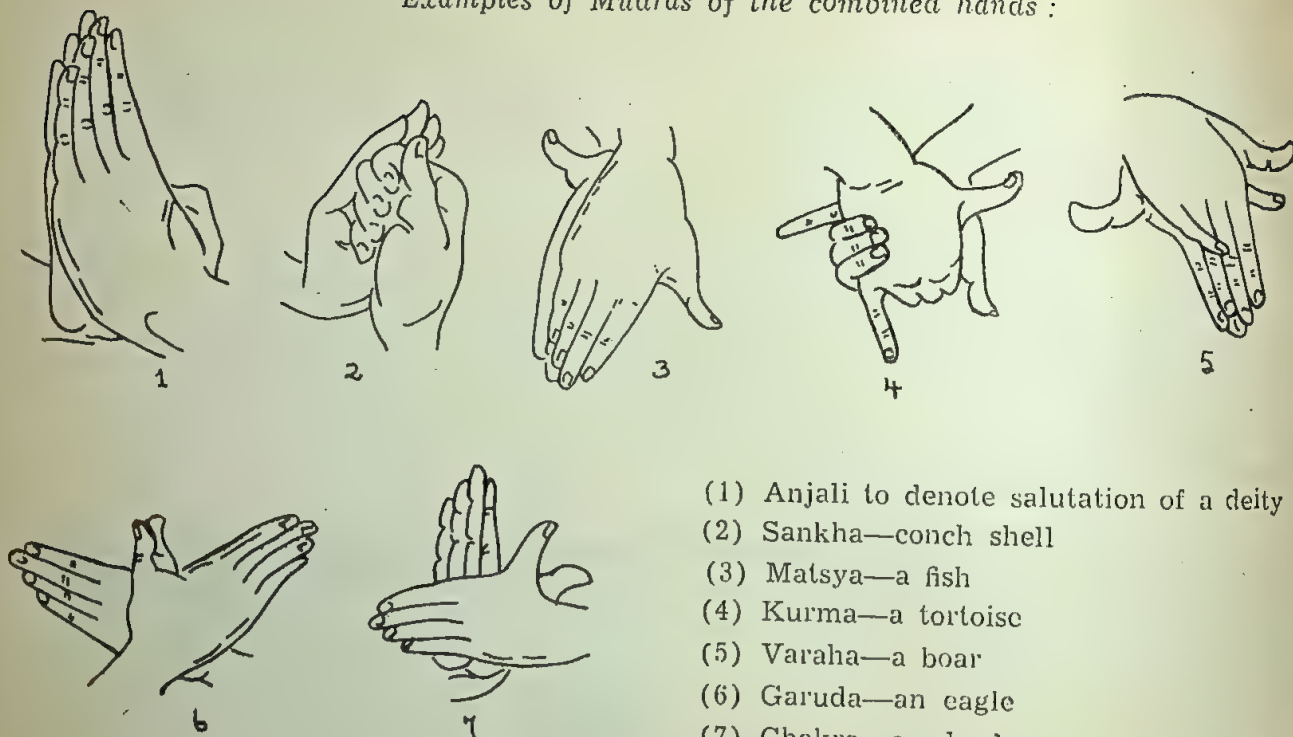
"In the beginning Brahman gave the Natya-veda to Bharata. Bharata together with groups of Gandharvas (heavenly dancers in the air) and Apsarasas performed natya, nr̥tta and nr̥tya before Siva. Then Siva, having remembered his own majestic performance (dance), caused Bharata to be instructed in that art by his attendants (ganas). And before this, on account of his love for Bharata, he gave to the latter, instructions in lasya (a graceful feminine type of dance) through Parvati. Knowing about tandava from Tandus, sages spoke of it to mortals. Parvati on the other hand instructed Usa, the daughter of Bana in lasya. The latter taught the art to milk-



maids of Dwaraka, and they taught it to women of Saurashtra who in their turn taught it to women of other places. In this manner this art was traditionally handed down, and has come to stay in the world."¹

¹ From the *Abhinayadarpanam* by Nandikesvara.

Examples of Mudras of the combined hands :



- (1) Anjali to denote salutation of a deity
- (2) Sankha—conch shell
- (3) Matsya—a fish
- (4) Kurma—a tortoise
- (5) Varaha—a boar
- (6) Garuda—an eagle
- (7) Chakra—a wheel

(Taken from the *Abhinayadarpanam*)

In the classical dances not only the body, head, neck, glances, rhythm of the feet and facial expressions (*Abhinaya*) play an important role, but also the movements of the hands and especially the positions of the fingers. These hand gestures are known as *Mudras* (meaning seal or signature). In the technique of dance, the *Mudras* are used for a definite purpose. They are a language of the hands used in accompaniment to the words of the song conveying the story or incident, object or shades of emotion. Several of the *Mudras* are also used during pure dance movements but then do not convey any specific meaning and are only ornamental. According to the "*Abhinayadarpanam*" by Nandikeswara based on the "*Natya Sastra*" (a manual of gesture and posture used in Hindu Dance and Drama translated from Sanskrit into English by Manomahan Ghosh) there are 28 artistic and symbolic positions of the fingers of a single hand (*Asamyuta Hastas*) and 23 of the combined hands (*Samyuta Hastas*) known to the ancient Masters and used to interpret the story and the mood.

Mudras describe :—

- (1) Nature : (e.g. clouds, forests, night, rivers, blowing of winds, moonlight, severe heat, waves, trees, flames of fire, lightning, creepers, different phases of the moon, storms, rains, sun, flowers, fruits, stars, planets, mountains, etc.)
- (2) Animals and birds : (e.g. there are different finger positions to indicate the fish, tortoise, boar, lion, snake, eagle, cock, parrot, bee, elephant, giraffe, etc.)
- (3) Objects : (e.g. a lamp, bow and arrow, vessel, shoes, pearls, etc.)
- (4) Activities : (e.g. ringing a bell, threading a garland of flowers, applying tilak on the forehead, applying sandalwood paste on the body, chanting mantras, meditating, fighting, shooting, tearing, carrying something, decorating, looking, listening, calling, forgetting, speaking, questioning, decorating the hair, dressing, tying anklets)

to the feet, being thin or fat, beautiful, ugly, weary, pleading, eating, writing, forbidding an act, expressing condemnation, giving leave to go, bathing, worship, rowing, riding, reprimanding, playing musical instruments, beating drums, etc.)

- (5) Moods (e.g. estrangement, separation, illusion, trickery, feeling love, dizziness, mockery, teasing, pity, valour, laughter, disgust, anger, fear, feeling of peace, wonder, heroism, good humour, pining, valour, majesty, courage, fury.)

Moods are mainly conveyed by facial expressions (Abhinaya) combined with the appropriate Mudras to intensify the thought.

Coronations and festivals are also described, as also deities, avatars and relationship (e.g. son, father-in-law, younger brother etc.).

According to the above mentioned ancient sanskrit text *Abhinayadarpanam* the dancer should perform her dance in the following manner :

"She should sing with her mouth, express the meaning of the song by gestures of her hands, show States (bhava — feeling, thought) by her eyes, and

beat time with her feet. Where the hand goes, the eyes also should go. Where the eyes go the mind also should go. Where the mind goes there the State (bhava) should follow, and where there is the State, there the Sentiment (rasa) arises."

Each Mudra has several meanings. The songs bring home how each Mudra will have to be used to express a special bhava (feeling and thought) or idea.

e.g. *Mukula* (blossom) (one of the 28 single hand gestures) means a water lily, eating, the God of love, etc.

Chandrakala (digit of the moon) denotes the moon, the crown of Siva, the Ganges,

Pathaka (flag) denotes river, region of Gods, entering a street, clouds, benediction, waves, etc.

Sankha (conch) (taken from the 23 combined hand gestures) denotes a conch shell.

Matsya (fish) denotes a fish.

K. S. Ramaswami Sastri in his book "*Indian Dance as a Spiritual Art*" tells us "the dancer must enter into the spirit of the Mudras and not merely exhibit the Mudras in a mechanical way. She must weave them into the dance as a supreme poet weaves into a perfect lyric."

Examples of Mudras of single hand :



(1) *Chandrakala* (digit of the moon) used to denote the moon, the face, the crown of Siva, the Ganges etc.

(2) *Sikhara* (peak), God of love, a bow, a pillar, questioning, the act of embrace, sounding a bell

(3) *Mukula* (blossom), a water lily, eating, the god of love (with his five arrows)

(4) *Pathaka* (flag) to denote the beginning of dance, clouds, a forest, forbidding things, bosom, might, a river, region of Gods, the horse, cutting, wind etc.

(5) *Simhamukha* (lion face) to denote a hare, an elephant, a lotus garland, a lion's face etc.

(Taken from the *Abhinayadarpanam*)

THE SYMBOLISM OF EASTER

By IRMGARD GEORGA SCHULTZ

Good Friday and Easter have a profound symbolism. Joel Goldsmith reminds us in *"The Contemplative Life"* that the crucifixion of Christ must be taken to symbolise the death of the ego-self. The Maharshi also has given the same meaning to it. Joel compares the ego-belief to a tomb in which we are buried ; so the crucifixion is naturally followed by the resurrection. "We must die to the belief that of our own limited selves we are something, that we have lives of our own, a mind, a soul, a way and a will of our own. We are to die to the belief that we have any virtue, any life, any being, any harmony or any success of our own."¹ Everything is summed up in the statement "Not my will be done but Thine." This holy affirmation is an acknowledgment of our own nothingness and God's Allness. It leads the way to the sublime revelation : "I and my Father are One."



This picture of Christ is said to be taken from an inscription on the signet ring of a Roman Emperor and to be authentic.

Thus the crucifixion symbolises breaking attachment to this world, killing the ego-self who can be attached. Following that, our higher Self rises from the tomb of ignorance or sin or self-will, triumphing over death.

Another historical symbol of this is the emergence of Saul of Tarsus out of his blindness as "Saul" into the light as "Paul". Then St. Paul could say : "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."² What Jesus called "the Father", Paul called "the Christ" : that is the Christ-consciousness, the Christ within. Joel Goldsmith says : "A Something walks before us, making the crooked ways straight."¹ If we have this conviction,

not only in our mind but in our heart, no material form of protection is necessary. He further says : "Hold steadfastly to the realization of God as the temple in which we live, as the hiding place, the fortress and the rock."¹ And he continues : "I live with God ; I walk with God ; I hold my mind steadfast in God ; I acknowledge Him in all my ways. In quietness and in confidence, in the assurance of God's presence ; God in me and I in God."¹ With this attitude of mind we are no more of this world, though still in this world.

¹ *The Contemplative Life*, Fowler. London.
² Galatians, 11, 20.

Our desires and aversions are two apes living in the tree of our heart. So long as they continue to shake and agitate it with their joggling and jolting there can be no rest for it.

SYMBOLISM—COMMUNICATION OR COMMUNION?

By Fr. THOMAS MERTON

The topic announced in this title could easily lend itself to a detailed, long-winded academic treatment. In order to avoid the disadvantages of such an approach, the author will permit himself to set down, in a more spontaneous and less organized form, a few bare intuitions. These may suggest further lines of thought in the mind of the reader.

In dealing with symbolism one enters an area where reflection, synthesis and contemplation are more important than investigation, analysis and science. One cannot apprehend a symbol unless one is able to awaken, in one's own being, the spiritual resonances which respond to the symbol not only as sign but as "sacrament" and "presence". Needless to say, when we speak of symbol here we are interested only in the full and true sense of the word. Mere conventional symbols, more or less arbitrarily taken to represent something else, concrete images which stand for abstract qualities, are not symbols in the highest sense. The true symbol does not merely point to some hidden object. It contains in itself a structure which in some way makes us aware of the inner meaning of life and of reality itself. A true symbol takes us to the centre of the circle, not to another point on the circumference. A true symbol points to the very heart of all being, not to an incident in the flow of becoming.

One might begin by asking whether one can even attempt such reflections, in the Western world of the twentieth century, without a certain note of urgency, accompanied by a sense of conflict and confusion. In other words, the reader must be prepared to find these remarks somewhat lacking in serenity. The tension in the West, especially in America, between a naive surface optimism (belief in scientific progress as an end in itself) and the deep, savage destructive tendencies of a technology and an economy in which man becomes the instrument of blind inhuman forces, makes us realize that the *degradation of the sense of symbolism* in the modern world is one of its many alarming symptoms of spiritual decay.

The most unique and disturbing feature of this spiritual degeneration is that it finds itself armed

with a colossal will-to-power and with almost unlimited facilities for implementing its brutal aspirations. Thus twentieth century man, who mistakenly imagines himself to be standing on a peak of civilized development (since he confuses technology with civilization), does not realize that he has in reality reached a critical point of moral and spiritual disorganization. He is a savage armed not with a club or a spear, but with the most sophisticated arsenal of diabolical engines, to which new inventions are added every week.

Nietzsche's declaration that "God is dead" is one that is now taken up, not without seriousness, by the prophets of the most "progressive" tendencies in western religion, which seems, in some quarters, eager to prove its sincerity, in the eyes of a godless society, by an act of spiritual self destruction.

Meanwhile, artists, poets and others who might be expected to have some concern with the inner life of man, are declaring that the reason why God has ceased to be present to man (therefore "dead") is that man has ceased to be present to himself, and that consequently the true significance of the statement "God is dead" is really that "MAN is dead". The obvious fact of man's material agitation and external frenzy only serves to emphasize his lack of spiritual life.

Since it is by symbolism that man is spiritually and consciously in contact with his own deepest self, with other men, and with God, then both the "death of God" and the "death of man" are to be accounted for by the fact that symbolism is dead. The death of symbolism is itself the most eloquent and significant symbol in our modern cultural life. Since man cannot live without signs of the invisible, and since his capacity to apprehend the visible and the invisible as a meaningful unity depends on the creative vitality of his symbols, then, even though he may claim to have no further interest in the "bringing together" (which is the etymological sense of "symbol") man will nevertheless persist in spite of himself in making symbols. If they are not living signs of creative integration and inner life, then they will become morbid, decaying and pathogenic

signs of his own inner disruption. The solemn vulgarity, indeed the spiritually hideous and sometimes unconsciously obscene nature of some of the "symbols" that are still held worthy of respect by the establishment and by the masses (whether in the capitalist West or in socialist countries), has naturally aroused the total protest of the modern artist who now creates only anti-art and non-symbol, or else contemplates without tremor and without comment the ultimate spiritual affront of those forms and presences which marketing and affluence have made "normal" and "ordinary" everywhere.

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The loss of the sense of symbol in scientific and technological society is due in part to an incapacity to distinguish between the *symbol* and the *indicative sign*. The function of the sign is communication, and first of all the communication of factual or practical knowledge. The function of the symbol is not the statement of facts nor the conveyance of information, even of spiritual information about absolute or religiously revealed truths. A symbol does not merely teach and inform. Nor does it *explain*.

It is quite true that the content of a religious symbol is usually rich with spiritual or revealed truth. Nevertheless, revelation and spiritual vision are contained in symbols not in order that one may extract them from the symbol and study them or appropriate them intellectually apart from the symbol itself. Revealed truth is made present concretely and existentially in symbols and is grasped in and with the symbol by a living response of the subject. This response defies exact analysis and cannot be accurately described to one who does not experience it authentically in himself. The capacity for such experience is developed by living spiritual traditions and by contact with a spiritual master (*guru*) or at least with a vital and creative liturgy, and a traditional doctrine. So, to demand that a symbol should fulfil the function of informing and explaining, or clarifying and scientifically verifying all the most intimate facts of the cosmos, of man, of man's place in the cosmos, of man's relation to God, of man's relation to himself, and so on, is to demand that the symbol should do what indicative or quantitative signs do. As soon as one makes such a demand, he immediately becomes convinced that the symbol is of far less practical value than the sign. In a world where practical use and quantitative scientific information are highly prized, the symbol quickly becomes meaningless.

When the symbol is called upon to *communicate*, it necessarily restricts itself to conveying the most trivial kind of idea or information. The symbol is then reduced to the *trademark* or the *political badge*, a mere sign of identification. Identification is not identity. "Rubber stamp" identification is actually a diminution or loss of identity, a submersion of identity in the generalized class. The pseudo-symbols of the mass movement become signs of the pseudo-mystique in which the mass man loses his individual self in the false, indeed the demonic void, the general pseudo-self of the Mass Society. The symbols of the Mass Society are crude and barbaric rallying points for emotion, fanaticism, and exalted forms of hatred masking as moral indignation. The symbols of Mass Society are ciphers on the face of a moral and spiritual void.

On the other hand, religious existentialism which seeks to restore man's freedom and deliver him from an 'inauthentic' existence in the world recognizes that without symbol and myth man cannot grasp the truth of his existential situation.

Werner Heisenberg, the physicist, has discussed the revolutionary change in man's attitude toward nature in an age of science and technology.¹ In the pre-scientific era man sought even in his "scientific" investigations to arrive at the most living and most qualitatively significant apprehension of nature as a whole. Such an apprehension, even when it contained elements of experiment and objective observation, remained essentially poetic, philosophical and even religious.

Modern science does not seek to create a "living representation" but to acquire and co-ordinate quantitative data from which to construct explanations or simply working hypotheses with a practical orientation. Where religion, philosophy and poetry use the power of the creative symbol to attain a synthetic apprehension of life in its ultimate metaphysical roots, science uses technical instruments to gather quantitative data about the physical universe and those data are reduced to mathematical formulas, which can then serve the practical needs of technology.

What is not generally realized yet is that modern science itself has undermined the world view of naive materialism which believed that "ultimate reality" could be found in the elementary particles of matter. Science has above all destroyed the materialistic idea of a purely objective knowledge in which we can, with absolute

¹ All quotations from Werner Heisenberg in this section are from his essay "The Representation of Nature in Contemporary Physics" (1954).

certitude, make statements about "reality" based on our observations of matter, as if we ourselves were observing everything from a platform of "science" in a pure realm of truth. Actually, as Heisenberg says, we cannot observe the particles of matter as pure objects since the fact of our observation itself enters into the interaction and behaviour of the entities we observe. Hence it is that the formulas of the atomic physicist represent *"no longer the behaviour of the elementary particles but rather our knowledge of this behaviour"*. At the same time technology as it develops and apparently "penetrates" the "mysteries of nature" in so doing *"transforms our environment and impresses our image upon it."* This use of technology and science to transform nature and bring it under man's power appears to Heisenberg an extension of biological processes so that man's technology becomes part of him as the spider's web is inseparable from the biology of the spider. The result of this is that man no longer stands in opposition to nature; he confronts no adversary in the world in which he is alone with himself and which he will soon completely transform in his own image. But the problem arises: there does remain one adversary, *man himself*, and as Heisenberg says, in this situation man's technology, instead of broadening and expanding man's capacities for life, suddenly threatens to contract them and even destroy them altogether. "In such a confrontation, the extension of technology need no longer be an indication of progress."

Now symbolism exercises its vital and creative function in a cosmos where man had to come to terms with a nature in which he was struggling to maintain a place of his own—albeit a place of spiritual pre-eminence. Symbolism strives to "bring together" man, nature and God in a living and sacred synthesis. But technological man finds himself in another artificial synthesis in which he has no longer any knowledge of anything except himself, his machines and his knowledge that he knows what he knows. This knowledge is not a knowledge of reality, but a knowledge of knowledge. This is to say—man no longer is "in contact with nature" but is only well-situated in the context of his own experiments. He can say with certainty how an experiment will turn out, but he cannot find any ultimate meaning for this. Man is therefore cut off from any reality except that of his own processes—that is to say, in fact, of his own inner chaos—and that of the extraordinary new world of his machines. As the knowledge of his own disruption is unpalatable, he turns more and more to his machines. But through the power of his

machines he acts out the uncomprehended tragedy of his inner disruption. As Heisenberg says, in the arresting comparison, "man finds himself in the position of a captain whose ship has been so securely built of iron and steel that his compass no longer points to the north but only towards the ship's mass of iron."

Heisenberg quotes the Chinese Sage, Chuang Tzu, who, twenty-five hundred years ago, discovered that dependence even on a simple kind of machine caused man to become "uncertain in his inner impulses". Naturally, the advance of science and technology is irreversible, and man now has to come to terms with himself in his new situation. He cannot do so if he builds an irrational and unscientific faith on the absolute and final objectivity of scientific knowledge of nature. The limits of science must be recognized and blind faith in an uncontrolled proliferation in technology must be abjured.

To return to the ship's captain, Heisenberg says that his danger will be less if he recognizes what has gone wrong and tries to navigate by some other means—for instance by the stars. To "navigate by the stars" he needs to go beyond the limitation of a scientific world view and recover his sense of the symbol.

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Alfred North Whitehead, who, as a scientist, took a cool and detached view of symbolism, declared that society needed to defend itself against the proliferation of symbols which "have a tendency to run wild like the vegetation of a tropical forest". It is certainly true that a mass of obscure symbols that have ceased to illuminate and invigorate may end by stifling social and personal life. Therefore "an occasional revolution in symbolism is required" says Whitehead, in a rather off-hand way, as if symbols could be created anew by act of Parliament. Nevertheless Whitehead is quite definite in saying "Symbolism is no mere idle fancy or corrupt degeneration: it is inherent in the very texture of human life." He sees clearly that symbolism does not seek merely to convey information but to enhance the importance and value of what it symbolizes (see his *Symbolism, its Meaning and Efficacy*, p. 63). He points out how in social life symbolism replaces "the force of instinct which suppresses individuality" and creates instead a dynamism of thought and action in which the individual person can integrate his own free activity into the work of the commonweal, without simply submitting, in passive and automatic fashion, to external directives of authority.

By means of the social symbol, the person can make the common good really his own. By means of the religious symbol, the person can enter into communion not only with his fellow man and with all creation, but with God. Symbolism is powerful, says Whitehead, because of its "enveloping suggestiveness and emotional efficacy" (id. p. 67). However, the symbol is not merely emotional, and "it affords a foothold for reason by its delineation of the particular instinct which it expresses" (id. p. 70).

Whitehead however, thinking in terms of the mass-movement and of blind political prejudice, points to the danger of those (political) symbols which evoke a *direct (reflex) response* without reference to any meaning whatever. The effect of such symbols becomes hypnotic—certain responses, usually violent, are elicited without thought and without moral judgement.

Thus in certain unhealthy situations the political or military symbol can produce the automatic obedience of storm-troopers and political policemen who are ready for any savagery and any abomination. The symbol, in this case, has the effect of suppressing conscience and reasoned judgement and bringing about a demonic communion in evil.

But is this the fault of symbolism as such? Certainly not. It is due to the degradation of symbols. A man who is trained to respond to higher, more creative and more spiritual symbols will *instantly react in revulsion* against the crude barbarity of the totalist symbol. His reaction, too, is instinctive and as it were automatic. What matters then is not that the symbol tends to concentrate around itself man's instinctive forces for action and self-dedication, but that living and creative symbols elevate and direct that action in a good sense, while pathogenic and depraved symbols divert man's energies to evil and destruction.

The point is to educate men so that they can discern one from the other.

But if in our education we assume that all symbolism is mere fantasy and illusion, we no longer teach people to make this distinction. Hence while imagining they have risen above the "childishness" of symbolism, they will easily and uncritically submit, in fact, to the fascination of the perverse and destructive symbols which are actually obsessing the whole society in which they live.

In our modern world the fascination of violence has become, through TV, magazines, movies, radio, etc. almost irresistible. There is now so much

free-floating terror and hatred in the moral climate of the world that the slightest and most ridiculous of actions can be interpreted symbolically and instantly unleash mass-hysteria on a global scale. The only remedy for this is in a return to the level of spiritual wisdom on which the higher symbols operate. This is easy enough to say: but is it actually possible today? Have we in fact simply fallen away from our capacity for 'symbolically conditioned action' in the higher sense (guidance by the *meaning and wisdom* of the higher symbol) and relapsed into purely reflex and instinctive action without reference to meaning, and above all *without any rational sense of causality and responsibility*?

At the end of his suggestive essay, without perhaps fully intending to do so, Whitehead speaks of the community life of ants governed (probably) by pure instinct rather than by meaningful symbol.

It is no new idea to say that if man does survive in his cybernetic society without blowing himself up, it may well be that, renouncing the creative symbol and living mechanically, he learns to make his world into a vast ant-hill. If mere survival is all we desire, this may seem a satisfactory prospect. But if our vocation is to share creatively in the spiritualization of our existence, then the ant-hill concept is somewhat less than desirable.

Obviously the direction that symbolism must take, is that of expressing union, understanding and love among men—that Tillich has called a "communal eros". But the crude symbolism of violence has gained its power precisely from the fact that the symbolism of love has been so terribly debased, cheapened and dehumanized. There is something very frightening about the awful caricature of love and beauty which has manifested itself for several centuries, growing progressively worse, in Western literature and art, including religious literature and art, until today the sensitive mind recoils entirely from the attempt to see and portray "the beautiful" and concentrates on the hideous, the meaningless, the formless, in a sincere attempt to clear the desecrated sanctuary of the rubbish which fills it.

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In a technological society, in which the means of communication and signification have become fabulously versatile, and are at the point of an even more prolific development, thanks to the computer with its inexhaustible memory and its capacity for immediate absorption and organization of facts, the very nature and use of communication itself becomes unconsciously symbolic.

Though he now has the capacity to communicate anything, anywhere, instantly, man finds himself with *nothing to say*. Not that there are not many things he could communicate, or should attempt to communicate. He should for instance, be able to meet with his fellow man and discuss ways of building a peaceful world. He is incapable of this kind of confrontation. Instead of this, he has intercontinental ballistic missiles which can deliver nuclear death to tens of millions of people in a few moments. This is the most sophisticated message modern man has, apparently, to convey to his fellow men. It is of course a message about himself, his alienation from himself, and his inability to come to terms with life.

The vital role of the symbol is precisely this: to express and to encourage man's acceptance of his own centre, his own ontological roots in a mystery of being that transcends his individual ego. But when man is reduced to his empirical self and confined within its limits, he is so to speak excluded from himself, cut off from his own roots, condemned to spiritual death by thirst and starvation in a wilderness of externals. In this wilderness there can be no living symbols, only the dead symbols of dryness and destruction which bear witness to man's own inner ruin. But he cannot "see" these symbols, since he is incapable of interior response.

In a recent essay, of a rather esoteric, yet popular nature, an American theoretician of nuclear war devised an elaborate "ladder of escalation" in which his avowed purpose was to construct a *rudimentary language*. It is a language of destruction, in which each rung on the "ladder" (including massive exchanges of nuclear weapons, destruction of cities, missile sites etc.) was a way of "saying something" and of "conveying information" to the enemy. One feels that millenia ago, in the early stone age, communication among men must have been more basic, more articulate, and more humane. The "ladder" (itself an ancient symbol, as in Genesis 28: 12, as in Babylonian religion, as in the cosmic tree, the *axis mundi* of Asian myths, etc.) has now become a symbol of the total and negative futility of a huge technological machine organized primarily for destruction. At the top of the ladder is not God, but "Spasm". But "spasm" is on every rung. All rungs of escalation are "insensate war".

Of course, the more constant and more public claims made by the salesmen of communication is that our modern media are still interested, first of all, in rapidly conveying messages of love. This

of course is another way of affirming what is in fact so universally doubted: that men still have messages of genuine love to convey. Let us, for a moment, not dispute this. Here is one instance of such "communication".

A busy physician in an American city has a telephone in his car, so that even when he is not in his office, at the hospital or at home, he can receive urgent calls. While he is driving through the city, his phone rings, and he picks it up. It is a call from Africa, via short wave radio. He listens. It is a friend who has recently gone to Africa. What does he have to say? Nothing. "I had a chance to make this call for nothing so I thought I would say 'Hello'". They exchange greetings, they assure each other that they are well, their families are well, and so on. They indulge in the same completely inconsequential kind of talk as in any other casual phone call. One can reflect on this and recognize that even some of the seemingly "important" matters that occupy the communication media are perhaps almost as trivial as this.

Someone will argue: what does it matter if they had no really serious information to communicate? This was something more than communication. It was an expression of friendship, therefore of love. Is not love more important than factual information? Were these friends not seeking *communion* even more than communication?

To this one can only answer that love and communion are indeed most important, and far outweigh mere "communication". But the fact remains that where communion is no longer understood, and where in fact communication is regarded as primary, because "practical", then people are reduced to making a *symbolically useless* use of expensive means of communication, in an effort to achieve communion. But the symbolic uselessness remains self-frustrating, since, in the code of a technological culture, to carry out such useless acts is to become guilty of a sin against the basic virtue: practicality.

Yet even here there are curious ambiguities, for while the extraordinary efficacy of technological instruments increases every day, one is obliged to admit that the uses to which they are put are increasingly useless and even destructive. What is the uselessness of a friendly phone call from Africa to America, compared to the titanic uselessness of space travel and moon flights? One suddenly realizes that in point of fact technology at present is built entirely on uselessness rather than on use, and this uselessness is in fact symbolic. (It is a symptom. And in a sickness, a symptom is a symbol. Right understanding of the symptom

can lead to restoration of health. Wrong response aggravates the illness.) The one great usefulness technology might have for us is precisely what no one sees: its symbolic uselessness, which no amount of sermons on progress can manage to justify.

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Traditionally, the value of the symbol is precisely in its apparent uselessness as a means of simple communication. *Because it is not an efficient mode of communicating information, the symbol can achieve a higher purpose, the purpose of going beyond practicality and purpose, beyond cause and effect.* Instead of establishing a new contact by a meeting of minds in the sharing of news, the symbol tells nothing new: it revives our awareness of what we already know, but deepens that awareness. What is "new" in the symbol is the ever new discovery of a new depth and a new actuality in what IS and always has been. The function of the symbol is not merely to bring about a union of minds and wills, as a cause produces an effect. The function of the symbol is to manifest a union that *already exists but is not fully realized.* The symbol awakens awareness or restores it. Therefore it does not aim at communication, but at communion. Communion is the awareness of participation in an ontological or religious reality: in the mystery of being, of human love, of redemptive mystery, of contemplative truth.

The purpose of the symbol, if it can be said to have a "purpose", is not to increase the quantity of our knowledge and information, but to deepen and enrich the *quality* of life itself by bringing man into communion with the mysterious sources of vitality and meaning, of creativity, love and truth, to which he cannot have direct access by means of science and technique. The realm of symbols is the realm of wisdom in which man finds truth not only in and through objects, but in himself and in his life, lived in accordance with the deepest principles of divine wisdom. Naturally, such wisdom does not exclude knowledge of objects. It gives a new dimension to science. What would our world of science be, if only we had wisdom?

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Appreciation of the symbol necessarily implies a certain view of reality itself, a certain cosmology and a religious metaphysic of being, above all a spiritual view of man. Symbols begin to have a living and creative significance only when man is understood to be a sacred being. The "desecra-

tion" of man begins when symbols are emptied of meaning, and are allowed to survive precisely in so far as they are patronizingly admitted to be misleading, but still "necessary for the ignorant."

The symbol is then regarded only as a politically or religiously "useful lie", insofar as it seems to communicate information on a childish level, information which is inadequate, but acceptable to those to whom "objective truth" is not yet clear. The "sacredness" of man consists however precisely in the fact that the truth for which and by which he lives is primarily within himself, and therefore prime importance belongs to the symbol which directs him to this truth, not as an external object, but as a spiritual and personal fulfilment. Without this interior fulfilment, the mind of man is not equipped to cope with objective truth, and the spirit that has no interior roots will find that its "scientific" knowledge of objects turns out to be "a lie" even when it is materially correct. It completely misleads him as to the meaning of his own existence.

Thus in order that man be profoundly secularized and "desecrated", symbols themselves must be discredited and excluded from art, culture and religion. For Marx, the symbol (above all, the religious symbol) is nothing but an instrument of alienation. Yet how many pseudo-religious symbols have sprung up in Marxist society, equalling in vulgarity and in triviality those of the capitalist and fascist societies? The emptiness of these symbols bears witness to the alienation of man in these societies.

The desecration of symbols has been systematically proceeding for two centuries and more, especially in semi-scientific theories of anthropology, archeology, comparative religion and so on. For example, consider the totally unrealistic theory that the art of primitive man took its origin in a utilitarian concept, the supposed magic efficacy of an artistic image. To paint a picture of a bison on the wall of a cave was supposedly primitive man's way of saying that he was desperately hungry and had not tasted bison meat for a long time. He painted a bison on the theory that the image gave him power over a real bison. The painting constituted a "virtual capture" of the desired prey. Once again, the symbol is seen only as an efficacious sign, an attempt to exercise causality to produce a practical and useful effect in the world of objects. This means that primitive art is understood only in modern commercial and technological terms.

A symbol is thought, like other signs, to have only a practical reference. It is supposed to claim a certain kind of efficacy, to pretend to a definite

causal influence: it provides a mode of control over objects. It is part of a technique. It is to be seen in a context of magic and archaic pre-technology which is now discarded as totally inefficacious. Art is then seen only as an imitation of objects, as a substitute for the possession of a desired object. What is important is not the art, but the object to which it points. This is the basic axiom of advertising, which suggests a need, awakens a need and keeps it awake, in the prospective consumer, by means of "art". This is also the principle governing political propaganda art.

This crude theory of the origin of primitive art lacks, first of all, any appreciation for the extraordinary creative power of these amazing symbols made by pre-historic man. The most elementary familiarity with modern psychology ought to be enough to show that such creative power could not normally proceed from a naked physical desire. It could only come from a sublimated transformation of desire.

Acquaintance with primitive religion shows us that primitive man had a deep sense of kinship with the animals among which he lived, including those on which he depended for his existence. His "love" for the bison or the reindeer was something far deeper and more complex than a modern city dweller's craving for this or that kind of meat, derived from an animal never seen in its natural state. This primitive "love" of the animals was embodied in a very complex religious relationship, hedged in with severe ritual limitations which prohibited useless and irresponsible killing and all kinds of misuse. Primitive art was far from being merely a weak, inefficacious, half despairing attempt of an inept hunter to bring down good luck on his spear. It was also an acknowledgement of a deep communion with all living beings, with the animals among which man lived on terms of familiarity that are no longer imaginable to us.

Hence the symbols of primitive art are vitally significant on more than one level. There is of course the representation of the every day level, the hunt for food. But there is also another level, that of kinship, of religious fellowship with the animal regarded from one point of view as superior to man, as "divine".

The Biblical polemic against the deification of natural beings and forces comes relatively late in man's cultural development, and doubtless by that time primitive religion had in fact become deeply degenerate. But a study of the philosophical ideas of the Bantu in Africa still shows that primitive man's reverence for life and for the sacred, creative dynamism of life, expressed in

his art and in his symbolism, could be extremely deep and pure. Modern man's misinterpretation of his primitive ancestor's thought and culture reflects discredit on our own blind complacency and sense of superiority.

Primitive art undoubtedly draws a great deal of its power from the ambivalence of love and guilt, due to the fact that man must slay a loved, admired and mysterious object, in order to keep alive himself. This became so strong that eventually, in certain highly developed religious cultures, such as those of India, the killing of animals and the eating of meat was eventually prohibited. Here one encounters an even deeper level of communion: the level of *being itself*. Man and the animal are finally seen as sharing in the ontological mystery of being, they are somehow one "in God the Creator". Or as Hinduism would say, *Atman* is one in them both.

Primitive art cannot be comprehended unless the implications of these different levels of symbolic meaning are somehow apprehended. Merely to declare that primitive art had a magic or utilitarian purpose, and aimed at a limited, practical result, is to ignore this symbolic quality and attach oneself exclusively to a supposed causal signification which is then shown to be so naive and preposterous that it cannot be taken seriously. Thus, substituting the practical sign for the religious symbol, the theorist manages to call into question all forms of culture, religious, philosophical, artistic, mystical, which make use of the symbol. All instantly become incomprehensible.

An American Protestant theologian, Paul Tillich, has rightly seen that "A real symbol points to an object that can never become an object." This is a profound and intriguing declaration. The symbol cannot possibly convey information about an object, if it is true to its nature as symbol. Only when it is debased, does a symbol point exclusively to an object other than itself. The symbol is an object pointing to the subject. The symbol is not an object in which one rests for its own sake. It is a reminder that we are summoned to a deeper spiritual awareness, far beyond the level of subject and object.

It would however be a great mistake to think that the symbol merely reminds the subject to become aware of himself as object, after the Western manner of introspection and self-examination. We must repeat, the symbol is an object which leads beyond the realm of division where subject and object stand over against one another. That is why the symbol goes beyond communi-

cation to communion. Communication takes place between subject and object, but communion is beyond the division: it is a sharing in basic unity. This does not necessarily imply a "pantheist metaphysic". Whether or not they may be strictly monistic, the higher religions all point to this deeper unity, because they all strive after the experience of this unity. They differ, sometimes widely, in ways of explaining what this unity is and how one may attain to it.

Christianity sees this unity as a special gift of God, a work of grace, which brings us to unity with God and one another in the Holy Spirit. The religions of Asia tend to see this unity in an ontological and natural principle in which all beings are metaphysically one. The experience of unity for the Christian is unity "in the Holy Spirit". For Asian religions it is unity in Absolute Being (*Atman*) or in the Void (*Sunyata*). The difference between the two approaches is the difference between an ontologist mysticism and a theological revelation: between a return to an Absolute Nature and surrender to a Divine Person.

The symbols of the higher religions may at first sight seem to have little in common. But when one comes to a better understanding of those religions, and when one sees that the experiences which are the fulfilment of religious belief and practice are most clearly expressed in symbols, one may come to recognize that often the symbols of different religions may sometimes have more in common than the abstractly formulated official doctrines.

The Chinese ideogram *Chung* (ϕ) bears more than a superficial resemblance to the Cross. It is also a picture of the five cosmic points, the four cardinal points centered on the "pivot" of *Tao*. This is analogous to the traditional Christian cosmic interpretation of the Cross symbol, the "picture" of the new creation and of the recapitulation of all in Christ (Ephesians 1: 12). One might pursue these analogies in studying the traditional Buddhist *Stupas*, and so on. It is sufficient to suggest these lines of thought which the reader can investigate for himself.

A symbol is then not simply an indicative sign conveying information about a religious object, a revelation, a theological truth, a mystery of faith. It is an *embodiment* of that truth, a "sacrament", by which one participates in the religious presence of the saving and illuminating One. It does not merely point the way to the One as object. As long as the One is regarded

as object it is not the One, it is dual or multiple, since there is a division between It and the one (or ones) seeking to attain it. Hence the question of a Zen Master: "If all things return to the one, where does the one return to?" To such a question there can be no answer since the question itself is contradictory. Reason might seek a way to get around the contradiction and resolve it. Symbol tends rather to accept the contradiction in order to point beyond it. It seems to take the One as if it were an object, but in fact it reveals the One as present within our own subjective and interior entity. It reveals that the subjectivity of the subject is in fact, now, deeply rooted in the infinite God, the Father, now, Word, the Spirit, or in Hindu terms *Atman*, *sat-chit-ananda*. The symbol does not merely bridge the distance, and cause the believer to become united with God. It proclaims that, in one way or another, according to the diversity of religions, the believer can and does even now return to Him from Whom he first came. It does not simply promise a new and effective communication by which the believer can make himself heard by the Deity and can even exercise a certain persuasive force upon Him. It does much more: it opens the believer's inner eye, the eye of the heart, to the realization that he must come to be centered in God because that in fact is where his centre is. He must become what he is, a "son of God", "seeking only His Father's will", abandoned to the invisible Presence and Nearness of Him Who Is, for there is no reality anywhere else but in Him.

But the symbol also speaks to many believers in one: it awakens them to their communion with one another in God. It does not merely bring their minds into communication with one another, in a common worship, for instance. Worship itself is symbolic, and as such it is communion rather than communication. (Hence the great pity of a certain type of Christianity which has become in great measure mere communication of information, a meeting where the audience is entertained by an inspiring lecture.) Worship is symbolic communion in mystery, the mystery of the actual presence of Him Who is Being, Light and Blessedness of Love. It is recognition of the fact that in reality we cannot be without Him, that we are centered in Him, that He dwells in us, and that because He is in us, and we in Him, we are one with one another in Him.

"... that all may be one, even as thou, Father, in me and I in thee; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that

thou hast sent me. And the glory that thou hast given me, I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them and thou in me; that they may be perfected in unity, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and that thou hast loved them even as thou hast loved me.

Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou has given me may be with me; in order that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me, because thou hast loved me before the creation of the world."

—JOHN, 17: 21-24.

The desecration of symbols cannot be blamed exclusively on the forces of secularism and atheism. On the contrary, it unfortunately began in religious circles themselves. When a tradition loses its contemplative vitality and wisdom, its symbolism gradually loses its meaning, and ceases to be a point of contact with "the centre". Symbolism degenerates into allegorism. The symbol has no life of its own, it merely designates an abstraction. In the system of allegories, everything points to everything else and nothing conclusively ends in real meaning. There is nothing but a circle of references without end. "A" points to "B" which points to "C" which points to "A". The centre is forgotten.

All that matters is to have a key to the hidden meanings and to know that "A" really stands for "B", so that when you say "A" you really mean "B". But then a scientific critic comes along and says that "A" does not mean "B"; that there is no way of knowing that "A" means anything at all, and all we can say is, that in 500 B.C. "A" was thought to mean "B", while today science shows this interpretation to be impossible.

When the symbol degenerates into a mere means of communication and ceases to be a sign of communion, it becomes an idol, in so far as it seems to point to an object with which it brings the subject into effective, quasi-magical, psychological, or parapsychological communication. It would be pointless here to go into the ancient Biblical polemic against "idols of wood and stone". There are much more dangerous and much more potent idols in the world today: signs of cosmic and technological power, political and scientific idols, idols of the nation, the party, the race. These are evident enough, but the fact that they are evident in themselves does not mean that people do not submit more and more blindly, more and more despairingly to their

complete power. The idol of national military strength was never more powerful than today, even though men claim to desire peace. In fact, though they pay lip service to the love of life and of humanity, they obscurely recognize that in submitting to the demon of total war they are in fact releasing themselves from the anxieties and perplexities of a "peace" that is fraught with too many ambiguities for comfort. Can man resist the temptation to sacrifice himself utterly and irrevocably to this idol?

Another idol that is not so obvious is that of supposed "spiritual experience" sought as an object and as an end in itself. Here too the temptation that offers itself is one of escape from anxiety and limitation, and an affirmation of the individual self as object, but as a special kind of object, to be experienced as free from all limitations.

The temptation of modern pseudo-mysticism is perhaps one of the gravest and most subtle, precisely because of the confusion it causes in the minds and hearts of those who might conceivably be drawn to authentic communion with God and with their fellow man by the austere traditional ways of obedience, humility, sacrifice, love, knowledge, worship, meditation and contemplation. All these ancient ways demand the control and the surrender, the ultimate "loss" of the empirical self in order that we may be "found" again in God. But pseudo-mysticism centers upon the individualistic enjoyment of experience, that is upon the individual self experienced as without limitation. This is a sublime subtlety by which one can eat one's cake and have it. It is the discovery of a spiritual trick (which is sought as a supremely valuable "object") in which, while seeming to renounce and deny oneself, one in fact definitively affirms the ego as a centre of indefinite and angelic enjoyments. One rests in the joy of the spiritualized self, very much aware of one's individual identity and of one's clever achievement in breaking through to a paradise of delights without having had to present one's ticket at the entrance. The ticket that must be surrendered is one's individual, empirical ego. Pseudo-mysticism on the contrary seeks the permanent delight of the ego in its own spirituality, its own purity, as if it were itself absolute and infinite.

And this explains the success and the danger of the current western fad for producing "spiritual experience" by means of drugs.

Shall we conclude on a note of pessimism? Not necessarily. The present crisis of man is something for which we have no adequate historical standard of comparison. Our risks are extreme. The hopes which we have based on our technological skill are very probably illusory. But there remain other dimensions. The fact that we are not able to grasp these dimensions is not necessarily cause for despair. If our destiny is not entirely in our own hands, we can still believe, as did our fathers, that our lives are mysteriously guided by a wisdom and a love which can draw the greatest good out of the greatest evil. The fact remains that man needs to recognize something of this mysterious guidance, and enter into active co-operation with it. But such recognition and co-operation cannot really exist without the sense of symbolism. This sense is now to a great extent corrupted and degenerate. Man cannot help making symbols of one sort or another, he is a being of symbols. But at present his symbols are not the product of spiritual creativity and vitality, they are the symptoms of a violent illness, a technological cancer, from which he may not recover.

Meanwhile, the final answer does not remain entirely and exclusively in the hands of those who are still equipped to interpret ancient religious traditions. Nor is it in the hands of the scientist and technician. The artist and the poet seem to be the ones most aware of the disastrous

situation, but they are for that very reason the closest to despair. If man is to recover his sanity and spiritual balance, there must be a renewal of communion between the traditional, contemplative disciplines and those of science, between the poet and the physicist, the priest and the depth-psychologist, the monk and the politician.

Certainly the mere rejection of modern technology as an absolute and irremediable evil will not solve any problems. The harm done by technology is attributable more to its excessive and inordinately hasty development than to technology itself. It is possible that in the future a technological society *might* conceivably be a tranquil and contemplative one. In any case it will do no good for us to remain specialists, enclosed in our respective fields, viewing with suspicion and disdain the efforts of others to make sense out of our world. We must try, together, to bring about a renewal of wisdom that must be more than a return to the past, however glorious. We need a wisdom appropriate to our own predicament; and such wisdom cannot help but begin in sorrow.

But one thing is certain, if the contemplative, the monk, the priest and the poet merely forsake their vestiges of wisdom and join in the triumphant empty-headed crowing of advertising men and engineers of opinion, then there is nothing left in store for us but total madness.

THE OLD MAN OF THE SEA

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

Sinbad's old man of the sea—
 Hooked upon his back
 Unshakably—
 Have you ever had one?
 I had for years.
 Gave me no peace,
 Driving, driving me on—
 "Come on! Get this for me!
 Attract that girl! Get in the limelight there!
 Grasp this chance! Jump the queue now!"
 Gave me no peace.
 Once he gets a hold
 No use appealing;
 No restraint in him.

It's him or me.
 Shake him off,
 Bash his head against a stone!
 If not he'll kill me,
 Wear me out,
 Driven, driven like a whipt slave.
 It's me or him.
 Not dead yet—
 Keep an eye on him!
 He'll be back in a trice,
 Keep alert!

* * *
 What bliss to be free from him—
 Simply yourself again!

WHY BHAGAVAN IGNORED SYMBOLISM

(EDITORIAL EPILOGUE)

All that has been said about the truth and profundity of symbolism in the foregoing articles may make the reader wonder why Bhagavan said so little about it, in fact practically ignored it. The answer is that symbolism is a great aid on indirect paths but is not necessary on the direct path of Self-enquiry or in the Advaitic doctrine on which this is based.

There are three levels of perception : physical, cosmological and metaphysical.

Seen from the physical level everything is a meaningless conglomeration of accidents and man is a stranger pushed around in an alien world by laws he did not make.

On the cosmological level the world is a vast book of symbols manifesting the attributes of God and reflecting His Being. Realities of the physical plane reflect or symbolise those of a higher plane, as is declared in the cryptic Hermetic saying : "As above, so below." Man is made in the likeness of God. The symbols can provide a path by which to trace one's way back to the Symbolised. The universe is a mirror reflecting Being. So are you, since man, the microcosm, corresponds to the macrocosm.

Still higher, on the metaphysical plane, attention is drawn back from the symbols to the Self. The world is not studied as a book of symbols but dismissed as a distraction, a dream, an illusion. As Bhagavan says in 'Who am I?': "Just as it is futile to examine the rubbish that has to be swept up only to be thrown away, so it is futile for him who seeks to know the Self to set to work enumerating the tattvas that envelop the Self and examining them instead of throwing them away. He should consider the phenomenal world in reference to himself as merely a dream."

Let us consider the question 'Why?' from these three levels. There can be few aspirants who have not at one time or another asked themselves this question. Why was I created? Why was I given an attraction

to the world and then told to fight it? Above all, why is there a world at all?

On the level of physical science there is no answer to these questions. It is unlikely that there ever will be, because they lie outside its purview; but even if there were it would neither confirm nor contradict those on the other two planes, being of a different nature.

From the cosmological level the answer, as given, for instance, in the Taittiriya Upanishad, is that the Supreme desired to create, to be multiple. "Having created all this He entered into it. Having entered into it, He became both the manifest and the unmanifest, both the defined and the undefined, both the supported and the unsupported, both the intelligent and non-intelligent, both the real and unreal. The Satya (Real or True) became all this, whatever is." (11, VI, 1). This does not mean pantheism. Indeed there has probably never been pantheism. The most satisfactory definition of the term would probably be : "a Western misrepresentation of Eastern doctrines." The Supreme remains utterly unaffected and undiminished by his manifestation in the universe, just as a man does by his reflection in a mirror. The same answer to the question is given in Islam also in the well known hadith in which Allah says : "I was a hidden treasure and I desired to be known."

Man or the universe is a book in which God's previously virtual potentialities are writ large. But 'previously' does not imply that this takes place in time. Time exists in God, not God in time. If we say that God was originally unmanifested, 'originally' refers not to a point in time but to the original state, which is timeless and eternal and therefore exists now and has never not existed nor will ever not exist, unchanged and unaffected by the simultaneous manifestation of Divine Being in the universe and in each individual being.

The metaphysical explanation is again on a higher plane, more simple and more direct. If the Maharshi was asked why there is a world he would reply: "Who says there is a world?" Or: "For whom is there a world?" Thus the questioner was driven straight back to Self-enquiry. This individual *me* sees a world outside it, but what is this individual *me*? Surely the first question to solve is what I am before coming to what I perceive. Who says there is a world? The individual *me* does, but is that the reality of me? First let me discover that and then see whether it perceives a

world outside itself or not. Thus the question why there is a world is dismissed as being based on an unproven premise, that is that there is an individual being who sees a world outside him. The validity of this premise must first be established or refuted before any deduction based on it can be fruitfully examined.

Thus it can be seen that, just as the physical mode of perception is below the level of symbolism, so the metaphysical is above it. While symbolism is of immense value on less direct spiritual paths, it is not needed on the path of Self-enquiry.

I, NOUMENON, SPEAKING

By WEI WU WEI

I only am as all beings,
I only exist as all appearances.
I am only experienced as all sentience,
I am only cognised as all knowing.
Only visible as all seeing,
Every concept is a concept of what I am.
All that seems to be is my being,
For what I am is not any thing.

Being whatever is phenomenal,
Whatever can be conceived as appearing,
I who am conceiving cannot be conceived,
Since only I conceive,
How could I conceive what is conceiving?
What I am is what I conceive;
Is not that enough for me to be?

When could I have been born,
I who am the conceiver of time itself?
Where could I live,
I who conceive the space wherein all things extend?
How could I die,
I who conceive the birth, life, and death of all things,
I who, conceiving, cannot be conceived?

I am being, unaware of being,
But my being is all being,
I neither think nor feel nor do,
But your thinking, feeling, doing, is mine only.
I am life, but it is my objects that live,
For your living is my living.
Transcending all appearance,
I am immanent therein,
For all that is — I am.

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

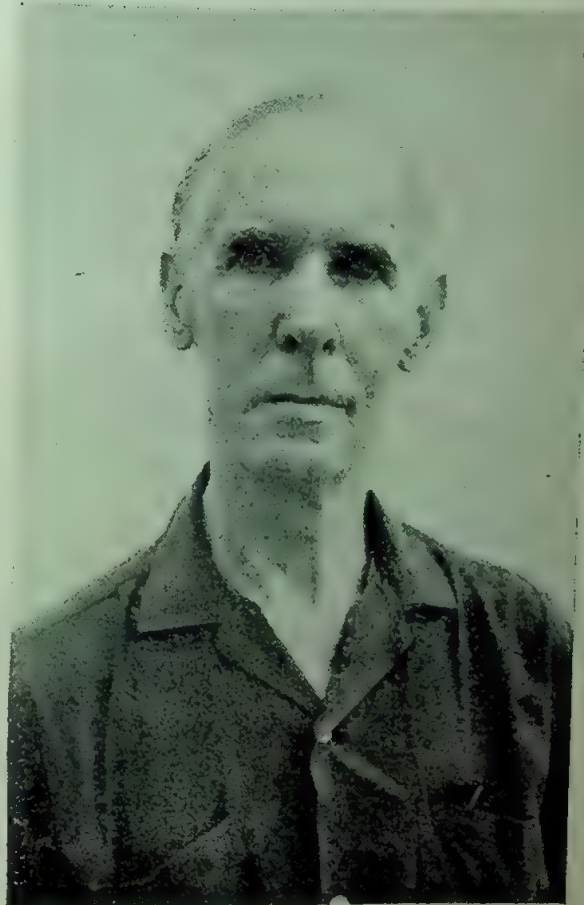
In September 1941, when my leave ended, the war was already drawing near to Siam (where I was employed as a university lecturer), so I left my wife and three children in India and went back alone. A friend had kindly opened to them his house at Tiruvannamalai. I went back without seeing Bhagavan.

In December the Japanese invaded Siam and I was arrested and interned. Just before that I had received a letter saying that my eldest daughter, aged five, and my son, three years younger, had asked Bhagavan to keep me safe through the war and he had smiled and assented.

There followed three and a half long years of internment until the Japanese surrender in 1945. There was ample time for sadhana. More and more Bhagavan became the support of my strivings, though I did not yet turn to him as the Guru.

As soon as the evacuation could be arranged I went to Tiruvannamalai, arriving there at the beginning of October; and yet it was as much to rejoin my family as to see Bhagavan that I went. Perhaps it would be more true to say that I simply felt I had to go there.

I entered the Ashram hall on the morning of my arrival, before Bhagavan had returned from his daily walk on the hill. I was a little awed to find how small it was and how close to him I should be sitting; I had expected something grander and less intimate. And then he entered and, to my surprise, there was no great impression. Certainly far less than his photographs had made. Just a white-haired, very gracious man, walking a little stiffly from rheumatism and with a slight stoop. As soon as he had eased himself on to the couch he smiled to me and then turned to those around and to



my young son and said: "So Adam's prayer has been answered; his Daddy has come back safely." I felt his kindness but no more. I appreciated that it was for my sake that he had spoken English, since Adam knew Tamil.

During the weeks that followed he was constantly gracious to me and the strain of nerves and mind gradually relaxed, but there was still no dynamic contact. I was disappointed, as it seemed to show a lack of receptivity in me; and yet, at the same time, it confirmed the opinion I had accepted that he was not a Guru and did not give guidance on any path. And Bhagavan did nothing to change my view.

Until the evening of Karthikai when, each year, a beacon is lit on the summit of Arunachala. Or it may have been Deepavali; I am not quite sure. There were huge crowds for the festival and we were sitting in the courtyard outside the hall. Bhagavan was reclining on his couch and I was sitting in the front row before it. He sat up, facing me, and his narrowed eyes pierced into me, penetrating, intimate, with an intensity I cannot describe. It was as though they said: "You have been told; why have you not realized?" And then quietness, a depth of peace, an indescribable lightness and happiness.

Thereafter love for Bhagavan began to grow in my heart and I felt his power and beauty. Next morning, for the first time, sitting before him in the hall, I tried to follow his teaching by using the vichara: 'Who am I?' I thought it was I who had decided. I did not at first realize that it was the initiation by look that had vitalized me and changed my attitude of mind. Indeed, I had heard only vaguely of this initiation and paid little heed to what I had heard. Only later did I learn that other devotees also had had such an experience and that with them also it had marked the beginning of active sadhana under Bhagavan's guidance.

My love and devotion to Bhagavan deepened. I went about with a lilt of happiness in my heart, feeling the blessing and mystery of the Guru, repeating like a song of love that he was the Guru, the link between heaven and earth, between God and me, between the Formless Being and my heart. I became aware of the enormous grace of his presence. Even outwardly he was gracious to me, smiling when I entered the hall, signing to me to sit where he could watch me in meditation.

And then one day a sudden vivid reminder awoke in me: "The link with Formless Being? But he is the Formless Being!" And I began to apprehend the meaning of his Jnana and to understand why devotees addressed him simply as 'Bhagavan', which is a word meaning 'God'. So he began to

prove to me what he declared in his teaching: that the outer Guru serves to awaken the Guru in the heart. The vichara, the constant 'Who am I?', began to awaken an awareness of the Self as Bhagavan outwardly and also simultaneously of the Self within.

The specious theory that Bhagavan was not a Guru had simply evaporated in the radiance of his Grace. Moreover, I now perceived that, so far from his teaching not being practical guidance, it was exclusively that. I observed that he shunned theoretical explanations and kept turning the questioner to practical considerations of sadhana, of the path to be followed. It was that, and that only, that he was here to teach. I wrote and explained this to the people who had misinformed me and, before sending the letter, showed it to him for his approval. He approved and handed it back, bidding me send it.

Daily I sat in the hall before him. I asked no questions, for the theory had long been understood. I spoke to him only very occasionally, about some personal matter. But the silent guidance was continuous, strong and subtle. It may seem strange to modern minds, but the Guru taught in silence. This did not mean that he was unwilling to explain when asked; indeed he would answer sincere questions fully; what it meant was that the real teaching was not the explanation but the silent influence, the alchemy worked in the heart.

I strove constantly by way of the vichara, according to his instructions. Having a strong sense of duty or obligation, I still continued, side by side with it, to use other forms of sadhana which I had undertaken before coming to Bhagavan, even though I now found them burdensome and unhelpful. Finally I told Bhagavan of my predicament and asked whether I could abandon them. He assented, explaining that all other methods only lead up to the vichara.

From the moment of my arrival at Tiruvannamalai there had been no question of my leaving again. This was home — even

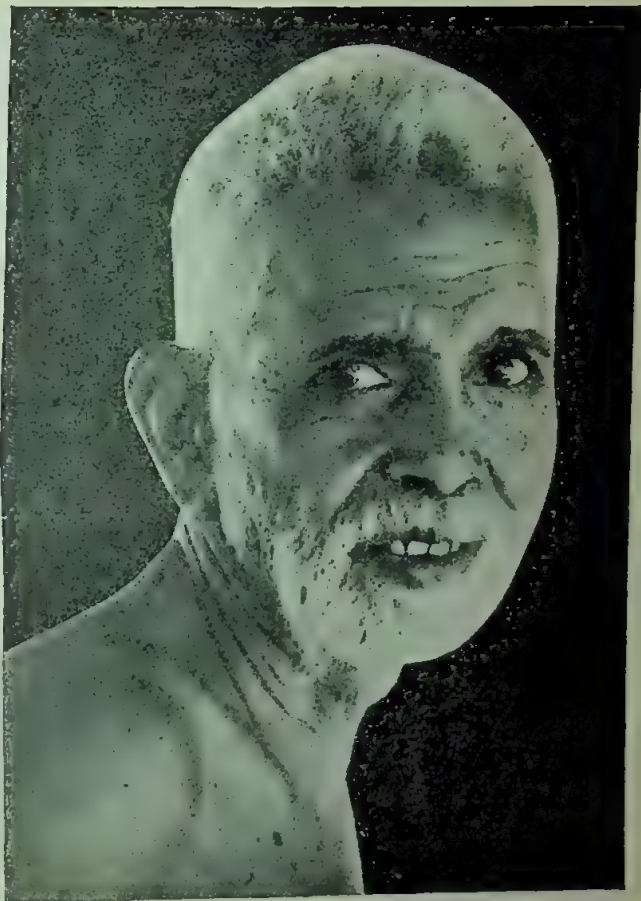
at the very beginning, when I was so mistaken about Bhagavan, even when material prospects seemed bleak. Perhaps that was why Bhagavan in his graciousness bestowed the initiation on one who sought but had not the wit to ask.

This period of constant physical proximity lasted up to the beginning of 1948. I had never been in a financial position to make me suppose I should be able to spend nearly three years at an ashram, but circumstances adapt themselves to the will of Bhagavan. Not only did his Grace keep me there, but it enabled me to go through the long period of unemployment and other trials and bereavement without undue anxiety. Although he never spoke of my difficulties or misfortunes, he flooded my heart with peace.

Early in 1948 constant physical proximity had ceased to be necessary and professional work had become urgently necessary. Work was found in Madras.

I took with me a life-size photograph of Bhagavan painted over in oils — a gift from Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami, a devotee and photographer. I showed it to Bhagavan before leaving and he took it in his hands and returned it, saying: "He is taking Swami with him." Since then it has looked at me with the love and compulsion of a Guru and spoken more profoundly than all the other portraits.

Thereafter I went to Tiruvannamalai only for weekends and holidays, and each visit was revitalising. I was there at the time of one of the operations that Bhagavan suffered and had darshan immediately after it, and the graciousness of his reception melted the heart and awoke remorse to think how great was the reward for so little effort made. I was there that fateful April night of the body's death and felt a calm beneath the grief and a wonder at the fortitude Bhagavan had implanted in his devotees to bear their loss. Gradually one after another began to discover in his heart the truth that Bhagavan



had not gone away but, as he promised, is still here.

Since that day his presence in the heart has been more vital, the outpouring of his Grace more abundant, his support more powerful. I have been to Tiruvannamalai since then also, and the Grace that emanates from his tomb is the Grace of the living Ramana.

During these years I had felt no urge to write about Bhagavan. After his body's death and his reassurance: "I am not going away; I am here; where could I go?" there was a dream in which he called me up to him and, as I knelt before his couch, placed his hands on my head in blessing. At this time an impulse came to write about Bhagavan and especially to explain the accessibility of the path of Self-enquiry which he taught.¹

¹ Taken from the Foreword to *Ramana Arunachalu*, published by Sri Ramanasramam.

THE MAHARSHI IN GERMANY

By DR. P. J. SAHER

Dr. P. J. Saher, a Parsi doctor living at Muenster in West Germany, is President of the Internationale Gesellschaft für Religionsphilosophie und Geistesgeschichte. He is also a close friend of the Altbuddhistische Gemeinde of Utting am Ammersee, which has become *The Mountain Path* agent for Germany and Austria.

One day as I was gazing affectionately at the picture of our beloved Maharshi, it came upon me to ask for a boon. "May I be brought into contact with the Maharshi's German devotees" was what I wished because I felt a bit isolated on my quest for the Higher Self. Thereupon I lost consciousness — not that I was at all in the habit of doing so. I awoke to the sound of my door-bell ringing. I got up and staggered to the door. It was the postman. I was too weak to shut the door properly and I felt as if I was about to fall. My last thoughts were directed to the Maharshi and I prayed to him for rescue. Then I must have fainted for I next saw the postman bending over me.

"Are you all right" he asked. "Shall I call a doctor?"

"Yes, do," I replied.

"Why, if you had fallen an inch more to the right or to the left, you would have banged your head seriously," he said.

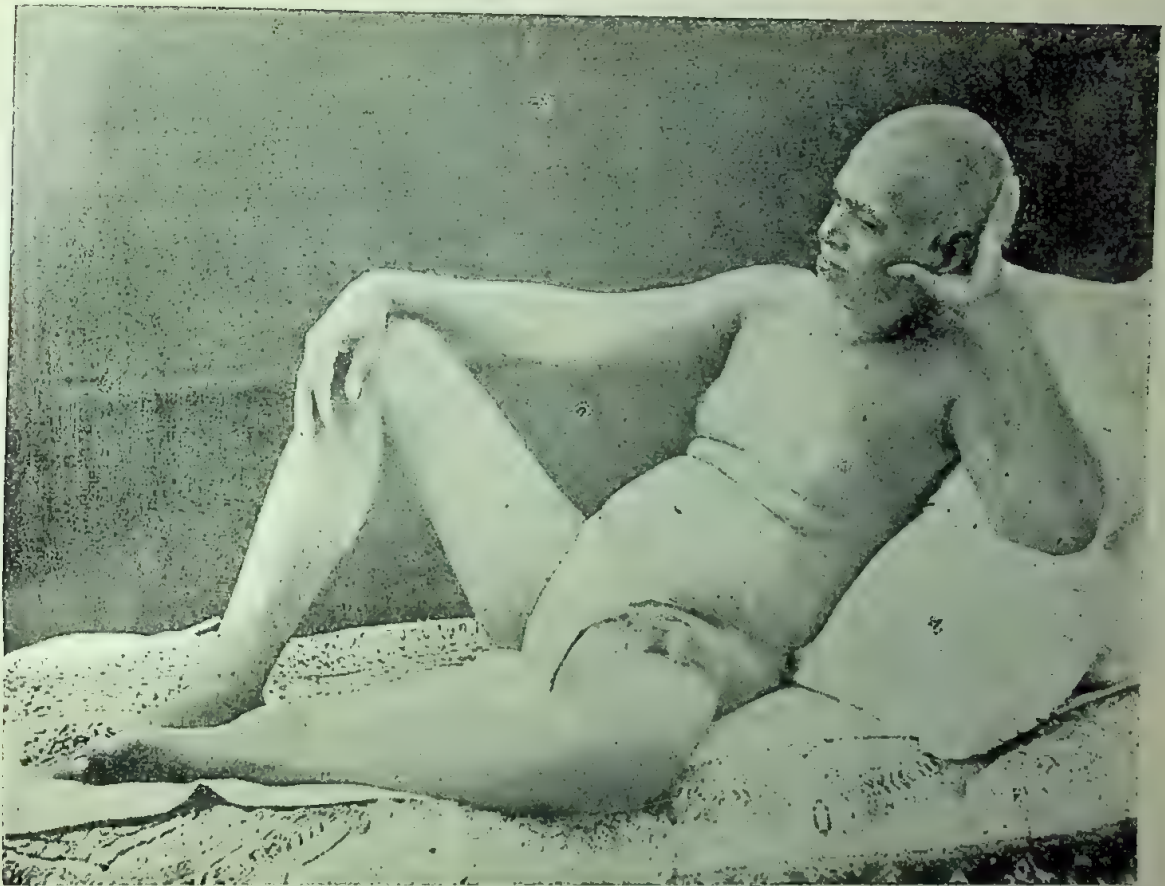
As I rested on the sofa I opened what the postman had brought me. It was a letter of invitation from the ABG (the Altbuddhistische Gemeinde or Buddhist Society) of Utting accompanied by a monetary transfer to meet the expenses of the journey. At that time I did not know that there was a single devotee of Maharshi in Utting but I did know that it was one of the few precious centres of Buddhist learning in Europe. I was reluctant to undertake the journey in my weak physical condition but as I gazed at Maharshi's picture, he appeared to be smiling assent, so I decided to go. And it was good that I did. Somehow the long and arduous journey did not tire me. The night train tore across the entire length of

Germany. Utting is a charming hamlet on the shores of an inland sea called Ammersee surrounded by solitary hills which are covered by the haunting forests of Bavaria. The Ammersee reminds one somehow of the Manasarovar lake in Tibet and the house of my hosts, die Altbuddhistische Gemeinde, was situated in an ideal spot. I could see the calm lake from my room and I found that I could meditate here better than usual.

This house in Utting (which is now open to all devotees of the Maharshi) deserves to be described in detail. It is indeed a kind of "ashram" where people come to stay from time to time in order to study Buddhist Philosophy (or for that matter any philosophy dealing with the Higher Self in man) and to meditate. This community house or ashram was founded by the late Georg Grimm, one of the most outstanding German scholars of Buddhist Philosophy.

Georg Grimm, a Mahathera as he is called today, was a judge of the High Court of Bavaria and was famous for pronouncing decisions which were not only just but also equitable from an ethical and human point of view. He, however, soon felt the urge to seek spiritual truth and something told him to look for it in the ancient wisdom of India. He thereupon gave up his lucrative post and took up the study of Sanskrit and Pali. He became an intimate friend of Paul Deussen, the famous translator of the Upanishads.

Georg Grimm studied Buddha and his teachings with extreme thoroughness and he was aghast at the superficial views of Buddhist thought in Europe at that time. People regarded it as a kind of "oriental pessimism caused by malnutrition"! Nirvana



was represented as an atheistic invention to abolish a self that never was!

Grimm's researches convinced him that the Buddha actually formulated a philosophy and a technique of logical thinking combined with meditation which helps us to understand ourself and the world around us as it really is. In his masterpiece *The Doctrine of the Buddha—the religion of Reason and Meditation* (Akademie-Verlag, Berlin 1958), he took great pains to prove that the Buddha's teachings are not at variance with the main tenets of Indian Philosophy. The Buddha (according to Grimm) belongs to the mainstream of Indian thought because he also was trying to draw our attention to the cardinal problem of Self in contradistinction to ego. (I hope to show later in this article how the Buddha in effect comes to the same conclusions as Maharshi Ramana).

On my arrival in Utting I was met by Brother Dhammapalo who, having renounced all, leads an exemplary life of fasting, meditation and study. He introduced me to Holy

Sister Maya (Georg Grimm's daughter and spiritual heir who now conducts the administration of the community-house) and to Sister Karuna.

Sister Karuna worked selflessly and unceasingly from early morning till late at night attending and serving all who crossed her path. Under her loving care I regained health and strength.

In the evening I was requested to give a talk to the inmates of the house. This took place in an adjoining temple, one of the very few authentic Buddhist temples in Europe. In its meditation hall I found the atmosphere so rich with spiritual vibrations that I felt anyone here would be able to meditate effortlessly and without the usual obstructions. The temple has also a treasure-house of Buddhist art with originals collected from all over the world.

In my lecture I made it plain that I was not a Buddhist but a Parsi and further that I saw no contradiction in being (and remain-

ing) a Parsi and having Maharshi Ramana as my guru at the same time. At my mentioning the name of Maharshi Ramana the faces of the audience lit up and they exchanged meaningful glances with each other. I wondered why. I propounded my thesis that if one accepts Buddha one ought also to accept Maharshi Ramana because the latter illuminates the same truths from a different angle and for a later generation. I give below a summary of my lecture.

Pure Being is equivalent in practice to No-Thing. The SELF is Pure Being. As such it is a No-Thing and consequently cannot be described in words. A positive affirmation of SELF (as Ātman) is logically difficult if not impossible. An ordinary person might even fall prey to confusion with it. (We notice this on almost every page of "Talks with Maharshi"). The Buddha therefore bypassed this obstacle by using the method of *reductio ad absurdum*. Indeed the *neti neti* (not this—not that) of the Upanishads is a similar treatment. Georg Grimm saw deeper than most Buddhist scholars of his time. His *The Doctrine of the Buddha* shows with enormous source material how Buddha came to the same conclusions as Maharshi Ramana, using the *reductio ad absurdum*, a permissible method when positive proof of an affirmation is not possible but the number of alternatives is limited. e.g.: Suppose that I am not in a position to prove affirmatively that what I hold in my hand is a pen. Suppose further that apart from it being a pen only three other alternatives are possible: that (a) it is a bottle, (b) it is a nail, (c) it is a hat.

If now I can conclusively prove that what I hold in my hand is not a bottle nor a nail nor a hat, I have thereby proved that it is a pen. It is such a method that both the Buddha and the Maharshi adopt to drive home the truths about our essential self.

The Buddha lets every disputant say what he regards as his "self". He then shows him that that cannot possibly be his (real) self.¹ After the disputant has thought out all possibilities he is at his wits end and despairs of knowing what he is.

That I am cannot be denied. But what if the Buddha succeeds each time in proving that I am neither this nor that? The only alternative then left is that I am nothing. (Many people wrongly take this to mean 'I am not' or indeed 'I never was' or even 'a self does not and cannot exist'). But the Buddha was an incarnation of wisdom itself. His aim was to provoke the adversary further into asking what this "nothing" is. In order to understand what nothing is the adversary is invited to contemplate the opposite of nothing. The opposite of nothing is all. And what is "all" composed of? "All" means for us all we can cognize with our senses plus all we can picture through our imagination.² What I can neither perceive, cognize nor imagine is not included in my "all". It is, therefore, as if it were nothing. The 'I' indeed cannot be cognized for it is the cognizer; it cannot be imagined because it is the imaginer! The 'I', being always the subject of cognition, can never be an object of cognition. The 'I', being always the imagining subject, cannot be the object of imagination. The 'I', being always the thinker, it cannot be anything think-able, i.e.: expressible in thoughts. The I is the "Nothing" which makes "all" possible. As Goethe put it: "In this your Nothing, I find my all" (Faust's reply to the devil.)

The 'I' is transcendental: that means outside the realm of logical thought. The Real-Self akin to Nirvana is *atakkāvacara* (*a* = outside; *takka* = logical thought; *avacara* = the realm).

The Ātma or our essential Self is always in a condition of Nirvāna. The teaching of Maharshi Ramana enables us to understand Buddhist philosophy in its pristine purity. Georg Grimm freed Buddhist thought from the mountains of prejudice under which it was (in Europe) submerged. Thanks to him we see how Maharshi and Buddha complement one another thus giving us one of the most perfect systems of metaphysical thought known to man.

¹ *Majjhima Nikaya*, 22nd Discourse.

² Cf. *Samyutta Nikaya*, XXXV, 24.

The Maharshi's cardinal question was "who am I?"; the Buddha's "what am I not?" By using the "what am I not method" one eliminates all one had superimposed on the Real-Self till there remains only the "Unborn, Unoriginated, Unmade, Unformed."³ "If there were not, monks, this unborn, unoriginated, unmade, and unformed, there would be no way out for the born, the originated, the made and the formed."⁴

At this point I told my audience about a miracle I had experienced through Maharshi Ramana's divine grace. Till then I had kept this experience secret for fear of being misunderstood.

It was near the end of August 1958. I had fallen on hard times. Insecurity and danger were lurking on all sides and my sole comfort was in thinking of Maharshi. My landlady showed me Zimmer's *Der Weg Zum Selbst* which she had bought for herself. I knew that the book was about Maharshi Ramana but could not read it, as at that time I was innocent of German! When I was alone in the room I actually wept because of my inability to read it. I was sure that Maharshi's wisdom could give me the guidance to overcome all worries for my future. This wisdom lay buried in a book I held in my hand but could not read! What would I not have given at that time to be able to read German. I wept with frustration. Then I distinctly heard a voice say with authority: "Read that book!"

I opened the book at the first page and each sentence my eyes fell on, the precise meaning was conveyed to me as if by telepathy.

When my landlady returned I requested her to sell me that book on the spot. She agreed but said with amazement: "Why do you buy a book you cannot read?" (My landlady and I used to speak English to one another. She had not however the intellectual calibre to act as translator or interpreter).

So miraculous was this grace that I read the whole book from cover to cover in seven days without even once consulting a dictio-

nary or asking anyone for aid. I understood the book so perfectly that I even underlined in black those passages I found important, in blue those more important, and in red those most important. Several years later, after I had learnt German properly, I noticed from the underlined passages that I had indeed understood the book correctly at that time.

The reading of this book was a great spiritual experience for me. Firstly, I felt so near to Maharshi Ramana being able to 'read' what I could not read. Then also the contents of the book were very important for my efforts at gaining enlightenment. It was indeed a source of inspiration for my *Indische weisheit und das abendland*⁵ (published by Verlag Anton Hain in 1965) which is dedicated to Maharshi Ramana and contains a chapter on him.

Feeling relieved that Maharshi Ramana's grace had come to my aid so spontaneously in a crisis, I gave up worrying about the future as something unworthy of a devotee. And indeed all turned out well. I remembered Maharshi's example of the man in a railway carriage who puts his luggage on the rack and lets the train carry it for him.

When I told this story everybody smiled appreciatively. I discovered later that, without my knowing it, they were all devotees of Maharshi! They had all read Zimmer's *Der Weg Zum Selbst* and all possessed a picture of our beloved Maharshi which they revered. I had been brought unwittingly into the midst of the Maharshi's German devotees!

The next day Sister Maya invited me to enter the inner sanctuary, so to speak, of the house. There in a position of great importance was a picture of Maharshi Ramana. I knelt before it in adoration. Then Sister Maya said to me: "When I am ill, I hang the picture over my bed." She then explained why everybody smiled the

³ The Maharshi also used this approach: "If you eliminate all that is not-self, what remains is the Self." (Editor).

⁴ *Itivuttaka*, 43.

⁵ 'Indian Wisdom and the West'.

evening before over my enthusiasm for the Maharshi. They themselves were equally enthusiastic. I then told them of the existence of *The Mountain Path* and soon several of them wanted to become life-subscribers. I suggested that since such a large assembly of the Maharshi's devotees were assembled in Utting, the ABG-Utting should also serve as the Ashram's and *The Mountain Path's* representative for Germany and Austria. We at once wrote to the Ashram. Sister Maya said that any devotee of Maharshi was welcome to come and stay at the ABG — Utting which itself is a kind of ashram. Efforts will also be made to hold an annual meeting of Maharshi Ramana's European devotees there.

Brother Dhammapalo (Mr. Max Hoppe), editor of the ABG-Magazine *Yana*, also gave a lecture in which he stressed the importance of studying Maharshi's teaching and described the coming of Maharshi Ramana as the most outstanding spiritual event of our time.

Next day a benevolent patron of the ABG, Mrs. Hopfner, took me to her mansion. It was a most beautiful place with a view of the lake and enclosed by solitary woods and hills. In her room also I found Zimmer's *Der Weg Zum Selbst*. Frau Hopfner's burning wish was to create a better understanding between the different religions of the world. She placed her entire villa and park, along with a separate lecture room and meditation hall, at my disposal to be used as a summer school for Comparative Religion this year. I agreed to conduct such a school and plans are already in progress.

It was late at night when I returned to Utting. As I lay in bed I had an urge to visit the temple below and give thanks for all the love and kindness I had received in Utting. I tiptoed silently into the temple and sat before the altar in meditation. I do not know how long I remained there. The place had a haunting beauty of its own. I

felt myself the recipient of waves of grace. I prayed inwardly "Sri Arunachala-Shiva! Shivoham!" Then again I did obeisance to Mahathera's picture. All of a sudden I had an uncanny feeling that the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the past had entered the room carrying with them an enormous wheel. (I marvelled that so huge a wheel could be encompassed within the confines of the room). Some of them had a friendly aspect while others were awe-inspiring. Then the Mahathera (Georg Grimm) seemed to appear at my side; or perhaps it was all only my heightened fancy. In any case I realised that the huge wheel was really the *paticcasamuppāda* (the formula of origination through interdependence). The Mahathera appeared to explain it to me, revolving both anti-clockwise and clockwise. Now I grasped what profound wisdom lay concealed in it. It is indeed a key to immortality. I wonder if it is possible without grace or exceptional insight to understand the secret yet unerring workings of this wheel. One who has got behind the mystery of this wheel could never again be life's victim. Indeed it was now that I realised what life was all about. It was Easter Sunday — and all the Easter Sundays of my life passed before me in review. I felt I could remember everything and it seemed that even my past lives on this earth were about to appear before my astonished gaze. A great sadness overwhelmed me and I realised how unworthy I was of even a fraction of this grace.

The prayer I mentioned at the beginning of this article had been answered. I wished to contact the Maharshi's German devotees and this had come to pass in a most pleasant and surprising manner.

Spiritually and physically refreshed, I returned home to Münster. On my return found an invitation from the Ashram for Maharshi's Brahmanirvāna celebrations on 18 April 1966. I at once phoned Sister Maya and told her of it. We both turned our thoughts to this important event.



The Bhagavad Gita

Translated by Prof. G. V. KULKARNI and ARTHUR OSBORNE

CHAPTER FIVE

After taking Chapter VIII out of sequence in our previous issue, for reasons there explained, we return now to the regular sequence with Chapter V.

1

Arjuna said :

You praise renunciation of action, O Krishna, but also the yoga (of action). Tell me clearly which is the better.

Here Arjuna returns to the question he asked at the beginning of Chapter III. The word 'sankhya', used there, meant 'knowledge' and the word 'sannyasa', used here, 'renunciation', but both are contrasted with 'yoga', here meaning 'the path of action', so the meaning is the same.

2

Sri Bhagavan said :

Right renunciation of action and right performance of action both lead to the goal, but of the two right performance is the better.

3

He is to be considered a perpetual sannyasi who neither hates nor desires, O Mighty-Armed. Being free from the pairs of opposites, he is easily released from bondage.

Thus Krishna applies the term 'sannyasi' to the man of inner detachment, not to the wearer of the ochre robe who has renounced the world outwardly.

4

It is child's talk, not the view of the wise, that the paths of knowledge (sankhya) and action (yoga) differ. He who is firmly established in one obtains the fruits of both.

5

The same state which men of knowledge attain is attained also by those who perform right action. He who sees the two paths as one, he it is who sees aright.

6

But it is difficult to attain to renunciation, O Mighty-Armed, without the yoga of action. A wise man who practises the yoga of action soon attains to Brahman.

7

He whose mind is purified by that yoga, who controls himself and is master of his senses, and who knows his self to be one with the Self of all, is unaffected even though engaged in action.

8, 9

He who knows the truth does not consider that it is he that is doing anything while seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, walking, sleeping, breathing, speaking, excreting, receiving, or opening and closing his eyes; he considers only that the senses are contacting the objects of the senses.

10

He who, relinquishing attachment, resigns his actions to Brahman, remains untouched by sin, like a lotus leaf by water.

The waxy surface of the lotus leaf keeps it dry, although growing in water.

11

Renouncing attachment, yogis engage in activity with the body, the mind (manas)

the intellect (buddhi), or simply the sense organs, for the sake of purification.

The word 'yogi' here means a follower of the path of action.

12

He who is integrated in Union (yuktah) attains abiding Peace relinquishing attachment to the fruits of action, while the non-integrated (ayuktah) is bound by attachment to the fruits through desire.

13

The self-controlled one who has mentally renounced all activity dwells peacefully in the city of the nine gates (the body), neither acting nor causing to act.

14

The Supreme Self (Prabhu) creates neither agency nor action for people, nor unites action with its fruit; it is one's own nature (svabhava) which does so.

15

The Universal Self (Vibuh) takes over neither the evil nor the good of any man. Wisdom (jnana) is veiled by unwisdom (ajnana); thereby are men deluded.

16

But in those whose unwisdom is destroyed by wisdom, that wisdom, like the sun, reveals the Supreme (Param).

17

Mind fixed on That, self merged in That, directed and devoted to That, their sins dissolved by wisdom, they go whence there is no return.

18

The wise (panditah) see with an equal eye a learned and modest Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog and an outcast.

19

Even in this life those whose mind is equipoised have overcome phenomenal existence (sarga). Flawless and uniform is Brahman; hence in Brahman are they established.

20

The knower of Brahman, established in Brahman, steadfast and clear of mind, neither exults over a pleasant event nor grieves over an unpleasant.

21

Unattached to outer contacts, he finds happiness in Self; united with Brahman, he enjoys eternal bliss.

22

The pleasures of the senses are sources of misery, O Son of Kunti, being ephemeral. A wise man (budhah) does not delight in them.

23

He who, even before being set free from the body, can resist the force of desire and anger is in a state of integration (yuktah); such a one is happy.

24

That yogi whose happiness is inward, whose joy and whose light are inward, attains Brahma-Nirvana and becomes Brahman.

25

Those Sages (Rishis) attain Brahma-Nirvana whose imperfections are destroyed, their sense of duality turn aside, their minds

controlled, and who seek the well being of all creatures.

26

Brahma-Nirvana lies around those who have freed themselves from anger and desire, who have subdued their minds and have known the Self.

27-28

The Sage (Muni) who, intent on Liberation (Moksha), has overcome desire, fear and anger, who turns away from outer things and sits with gaze fixed between the eyebrows and with out-going and in-coming breath made equal in the nostrils, is for ever free.

29

Knowing Me as the enjoyer of sacrifices and austerities, the Great Lord of all the worlds, the Friend of all beings, he attains Peace.

The previous 5 verses describe the attainment of Liberation through self-control and imperturbability; verse 29 adds also the element of devotion. Knowing God as the enjoyer of sacrifices and austerities means performing them not as a mere formal discipline but as a mode of surrender of the individual to the Universal. That is what makes them effective.

Here ends the Fifth Chapter of the Bhagavad-Gita entitled the Yoga of the Renunciation of Action.

HA I K U

By MICHAEL RIGGS

In the temple court,
Waking,
I raise my head :
The moon is round.

A NOTE ON VEDIC SYMBOLISM

By M. P. PANDIT

In a sense, all forms are symbols. Each symbol is a representation, on one plane, of a reality on another plane of existence. This perception of physical forms being living symbols of psychological and spiritual realities was very common among all societies in their Mystic Age. For every human society has its stages which for purposes of study we may loosely group into Ages, the Mystic Age governed by symbols, the Typal Age, the Age of Reason and so on.

The Age of the Veda was pre-eminently an age of symbols. Everything in life, in the physical environment of those times, reminded the seers of the deeper verities of existence which were brooding behind. Features, happenings, physical forms, recalled to the mind of the *rishis* developments in their own inner life in which they were ceaselessly engaged. Thus the *hill* with its rising plateaux reminded them of the Reality of Existence with its ascending planes of consciousness to be scaled by the human soul. The *waters* come as a natural figure for the currents of energies from which life is born and on which it is sustained. Agni, the living *flame*, is a transparent symbol for the dynamic aspiration and will that burns in the being of man for self-exceeding. The physical *sun*, the source of light in the universe, is the symbol of the Sun of Truth that irradiates the whole of Creation with his

luminous energy. The *rishi* speaks of several Suns, one on each plane of being — the physical sun is only one of the solar concentrations of the Truth-Light.

There are other kinds of symbol in the Vedic hymnal which are more or less conventional, e.g. the *Cow* which stands for *Light* or the *Horse* which symbolises *Power*. The live state of language of those times helped them to transmit these truths in a natural manner. Thus the word *go* in Sanskrit means both the quadruped of that name, cow, and also a ray of light. And light — in all spiritual experience — is the physical form of knowledge. So to the *rishi* the cow stands for spiritual knowledge. Milk is the yield of the cow; so is ghee, *ghrita*; and hence both are figures for formations of illumined thought.

Sacrifice, *yajna*, an important feature of the Vedic society, is itself a spectacular symbol of the inner effort of the seer at self-transcendence in which he consecrates himself, all that he is and has, to the Gods. This sacrifice is aptly spoken of as a journey — going from the finite to the infinite; as a battle — a fight against obscurity from within and without; at times, as an ascent — from the plains of ordinary life to the mounting peaks of divine existence.

The Veda is a world of symbols.

He is and there is with Him no before or after, nor above nor below, nor near nor far, nor union nor division, now how nor where nor place. He is now as He was; He is the One without oneness and the Single without singleness. He is the very existence of the First and the very existence of the Last and the very existence of the Outward and the very existence of the Inward.

— IBN ARABI

NOTES ON SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI'S HOROSCOPE

(WESTERN STYLE)

By the late RAO SAHIB M. D. SAGANE

(Through his brother H. D. SAGANE)

Maharshi's horoscope shows two celestial bodies, Moon and Jupiter, strong through being in their respective signs, Cancer and Pisces. On the other hand four planets Mercury, Venus, Mars and Saturn, are weak since they are in signs of their fall or detriment. One might, therefore, be surprised, how a person with so many weak or debilitated planets could be great. But the truth is that weak planets do not negative a birth in or rise to glory and greatness. So far as men of purely mundane activities are concerned, my experience is that with such weak planets they meet with ultimate downfall, disappointment and degradation. The horoscopes of the Kaiser, Hitler and others such constitute a good illustration of this. But in mystic or spiritual life such weak planets (as may be seen from the horoscopes of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and other masters), are indicative of greatness. Seers, saints and sages naturally possess such planets. The reason is that there is no mundane life for them in the ordinary sense. They give it up and lead a life of renunciation. The difference between them and worldly men with weak planets is that the former voluntarily give up or are not attached to riches, pleasures and all that constitutes temporal life, while the latter are deprived of them or compelled to give them up to their great sorrow and disappointment.

The Maharshi's weak planets put him in the brotherhood of sages. For even as early as at the age of 17, he gave up all that he had or could have had. He left his mother and brothers. He abandoned his home and left for Arunachala in the quest of his 'FATHER'. He threw away the few coins that he had and even the packet of sweets given to him by a pious couple on his way to Tiruvannamalai. He renounced everything. And all this was not casual. It was not a matter of momentary impulse. The life of renunciation that he began continued with vigour, in self poise and complete non-attachment all his years. Other indications of this will be examined below, but there can be no doubt that four debilitated planets provide a part explanation of this important phenomenon. Queer indeed is the arith-

metic of the planets; for at times, it means that mundane fall or loss is tantamount to spiritual rise or gain.

Other features in the horoscope are the conjunction of Mars and Neptune in the 7th house in opposition to Venus of the 2nd and Saturn's affliction by square to the Sun in Capricorn. Both are of similar nature, calculated to bring about poverty and privations creating obstacles and difficulties of severe type. As regards the first, the 7th is the house of marriage. Venus has influence over marriage and female relatives. Being in the 2nd house (Dhanasthan), she has dominion over wealth and comforts also. The affliction of Venus by Mars is, therefore, significant and indicates conditions against marriage; and that is why Maharshi led an unmarried life of strict celibacy. He was also destined to separate from his mother and renounce what the world could offer. He went, so to say, in exile in the quest of his 'FATHER' and never returned home in spite of the pitiful appeals of his mother. As regards the second feature, the sign Capricorn corresponding as it does to the 10th house, symbolises the apex or zenith of mundane life and activities. The Sun-Saturn affliction, therefore, indicates disruption and disintegration of mundane life or activities. Great indeed were the hardships and privations that Maharshi underwent since he left home. Disruption of family and social life, the long spell of seclusion and solitude that followed, the persecution by town urchins and later by bogus sadhus, accentuated Maharshi's trials.

But the aforesaid combinations, though evil in a worldly sense, were pregnant with possibilities of a high order. The Sun-Saturn influence in particular is very important. It makes one fearless and enables one to pursue one's course unbent, disregarding all protests, obstacles, persecutions and misfortunes that necessarily obstruct the way. It gives all the qualities requisite for a leader, namely stern will, indomitable courage and unswerving determination. It makes a man put up a manly fight, as it were, to fit him for

the mission he has to fulfil. No man who has done something solid for the world and benefited humanity, no reformer or pioneer who has forged a new path, initiated a new school of thought or done some special work, has lacked some such discordant aspect as an afflicted Sun. Take any great man, say Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Mahatma Gandhi or any other who had a valuable mission, and you will surely find such an affliction in his horoscope. For such men must and do meet with difficulties and disappointments of a severe type, since the world, as it is constituted, always creates obstructions in their way. But they surmount them all. It was, therefore, in the fitness of things that the Maharshi had an afflicted Sun and Venus. He had to tread through worldly wants to attain spiritual wealth.

Till now we have discussed the negative and discordant aspects only. We shall now turn to

the positive side. In any horoscope three centres are very important. They are the Ascendant (Lagna), the Sun and the Moon. These will now be dealt with, and also other influences.

The 23rd degree of the airy sign Libra is on Maharshi's ascendant (Eastern horizon). Airy signs represent intellectual self-consciousness. Libra in particular is connected with Mind. A Libran possesses good memory, pure reason and clear perception. Symbolising unity and balance, as Libra does, he seeks unity, taking a balanced view of the subjective and objective aspects of existence or consciousness.

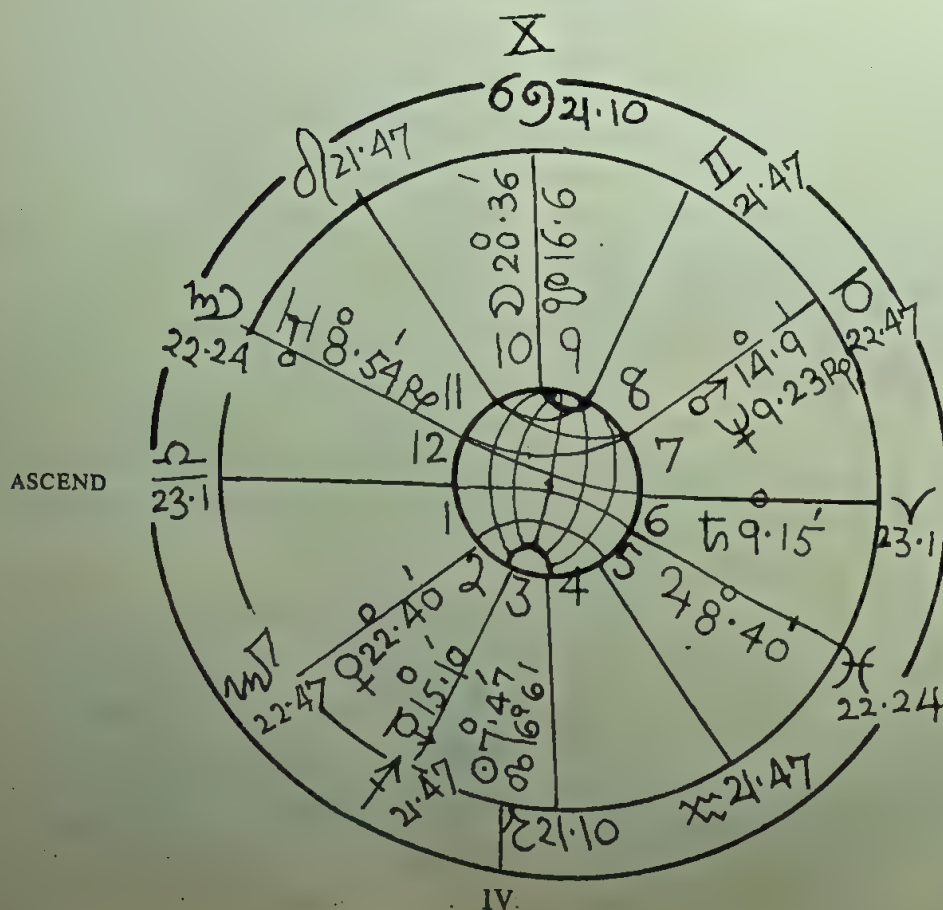
The Maharshi was profoundly mystic, in fact a mystic Sage. One could see this from his Sphinx-like serene look with a slight captivating ripple of a smile on it. Astrological causes for this are various. The Sun's trines with occult

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

Born on 29/30-12-1879 at 1-00 A.M./L.M.T. (1-17 A.M./I.S.T.)

at 78°-15' E — 9°-50' N

(TIRUCHUZH near Madurai, S. India)



Uranus and mystic Neptune,¹ the residence of Venus in the psychic and occult sign Scorpio, her trines with Moon and Jupiter in the psychic or watery signs Cancer and Pisces, as also the trine between Mercury and Saturn are responsible for this. We shall analyse them, first in their abstract or theoretical aspect and then in their concrete and practical form.

Occupation of watery of psychic signs by Moon, Venus and Jupiter means that the mind is receptive, refined and highly developed. The benefic nature of the planets concerned assured smooth and rapid progress to higher planes of consciousness. Thus the foundation of the huge spiritual structure of the future was well and firmly laid by these forces and the ascendant.

Now for Uranus and Neptune. Uranus is well known as a planet of sudden, surprising or revolutionary events and changes of an iconoclastic nature. On a higher level however, he represents scientific intellect that dissects things like a surgeon or an impartial judge. He possesses power to discover the hidden side of things. Further, he illuminates the brain and can bestow universal knowledge. In short, Uranus works on the mental plane, and is an occult awakener. Neptune is still subtler. His plane or vision is beyond that of Uranus. It is mystic, intuitional and spiritual. Uranus may give mere knowledge, but Neptune gives universal love and a sense of unity with all forms of life. To those who are acquainted with the Maharshi's life, it will be apparent that there is a beautiful blend of their influences in him.

The Maharshi was a hard, ruthless thinker. Without any Guru and without any aid or guide, he thought coolly and intensively even when in the grip of the fear of death at the early age of 17, solving the riddle of life and death at that very moment. It was Uranus who did this and who, in accordance with his sudden surprising and revolutionary nature, made him quit his home for Arunachala suddenly a few months later and revolutionised his whole life. The change that came over Maharshi was certainly of iconoclastic nature as it broke all bonds of home and all affinities towards the world of senses. Uranus was certainly responsible for it. But the picture would not be complete unless we take into account the Mercury-trine-Saturn influence.

The occult combination of Sun-Uranus was helped by the combination of Mercury and Saturn, Mercury-trine-Saturn conferred the gift

of deep thought and profound philosophy, and also of meditation and concentration. This is particularly true as Mercury is almost in the 3rd house which is mental. The result was that Maharshi gave up his studies in the middle of 1896 and took to meditation. He realised himself through meditation on Self and in his teachings therefore, he asks all to do the same. If Self is gained, all is gained.

Maharshi's teachings sometimes appeared dry and terse. It looked as if he did not want to communicate. That was true in a sense. He was a silent sage. He observed silence for years. His motto was that silence is the best means of communication. That is the Saturnine influence which is prominent through his aspects to the Sun and Mercury and by Sun's residence in Saturn's sign Capricorn. It is no wonder therefore that taciturnity or reserve was apparent in the Maharshi where communication by words was concerned.

Maharshi's terseness or taciturnity did not, however, mean that he was wanting in sympathy or was devoid of love. On the contrary he possessed universal love. To him, all were alike. What else can explain his loving behaviour towards others? He would not partake of any food unless all in the Ashram could share it with him. He treated cows, dogs, all animals, like men and took care that their self-respect was not offended. And all these beings loved him. Herein then is the manifestation of mysticism of Neptune, and also of Jupiter in Pisces, the sign which is a 'universal solvent'. The Maharshi had no separate entity. It was dissolved in the infinite ocean of universal consciousness. He was in all; and all was in him; a halo of universal brotherhood surrounded him; and it rayed out love and peace in all directions.

The first occult or mystic experience Maharshi had was of the thrill that coursed through him on hearing the name 'Arunachala' from an aged relative. It created a devotional feeling of love and respect for saints in him. And when the thrill repeated itself, the feeling induced was

¹ The Western style chart of the Maharshi's horoscope which we published on page 60 of our issue of Jan. 1966 did not include the two new planets, Uranus and Neptune, which were not yet considered when he was born. The present author has plotted them in, Uranus in the 8th degree of Virgo and Neptune in the 9th degree of Taurus. This puts them in a grand trine with the Sun in the 7th degree of Capricorn, the third earthy sign. — (Editor)

more intense and persistent. The thrill was a mystic call from 'Father' 'Arunachaleshwar' or the Self. It was the result of a highly developed psychic nature. The presence of Venus, Moon and the Divine Jupiter in the watery or psychic signs is responsible for his receptivity to the call and for the devotional sentiments roused by it. The second experience occurred when the fear of death gripped him in June 1896. In this Venus, the ruler of Maharshi's ascendent, is a vital factor. As ruler, she represents the 'personal self'. Being in Scorpio, the 8th zodiacal sign, she is Lady of the 8th house also. The eighth sign and eighth house are associated, among other things, with sex, death, occultism mysticism and therefore with generation, regeneration and transmutation. An esoteric synthesis of these factors can have only one meaning, that the Maharshi was to attain sublimation as a result of interaction between mind, personal self, sex and death. Had it been otherwise, the fear of death would have simply paralysed him as would have been the case with an ordinary man. But it did not. On the contrary it made him go through the experience of death and led him on to the 'SELF' securing for him abiding Self-Realisation. The fear that frightened him made him fearless and placed him beyond the bonds of life and death. Such was the transformation or transmutation!

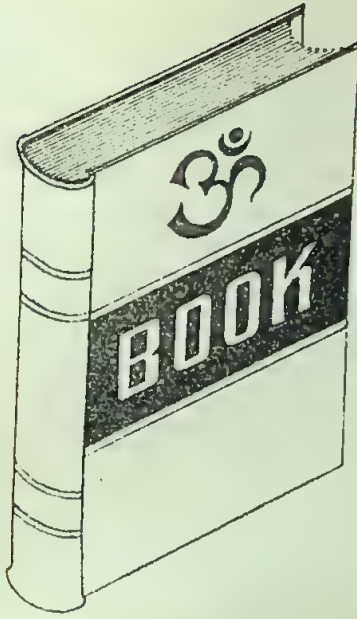
The question of sex is generally avoided, but it must be given its proper importance. Sex-energy is undoubtedly one of the greatest forces. In fact it is a primary force of vital importance. Creation, procreation, generation and regeneration proceed from it in this world of manifestation. If properly harnessed or polarised, the force is available for expression on other planes. Its sublimation transports a man to high spiritual levels. And it was so with the Maharshi. Nega-

tion of sex life fulfilled this function in his case. Similarity of planetary positions in the horoscopes of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Mahatma Gandhi are striking enough in this respect. Absence, control or polarisation of sex life may not necessarily lift personal self to the higher planes of consciousness. But in the Maharshi's case this was assured since Moon, Venus and Jupiter on the one hand and Sun, Uranus and Neptune on the other formed benefic combinations.

Lastly, as regards the Maharshi's fame and influence. Some saints and sages may have come and gone unheard and unnoticed, without influencing the world to any appreciable extent. But the Maharshi's fame is world-wide and his influence profound. Though to all appearance inactive and enveloped in the serenity of silence, he has been and is exerting dynamic influence, more potent than that of those whom we call 'men of action'. That is the effect of planets in cardinal signs and angular houses. A person with such planets is a man of energy in action, though his activities may not in all cases be visible on lower planes. This is particularly true if even one of the planets is in the 10th house. Now the Maharshi had Moon and Neptune in angular houses (10th and 7th) and Sun, Moon and Saturn in Cardinal signs (Capricorn, Cancer and Aries); and of these the Moon is in the 10th house. Furthermore his ascendant is also the Cardinal sign Libra. It is no wonder herefore, that with such enormous force behind him he is renowned the world over and is exerting tremendous spiritual influence, though silently. The needs of the world to-day are many, but the essential need is for 'spiritual food', though it is not felt distinctly and consciously. The subtle vibrations emanating from Maharshi will, however, make the world aware of it and make it listen to his message of 'Self-Realisation'.

I have built my house in the stainless. I am merged in the formless. I am one with the illusionless. I have attained to unbreakable unity. Tuka says: "Now there is no room for ego. I am identified with the eternally pure."

—TUKARAM.



REVIEWS

✓
THE FOUR YOGAS, THE PATHS TO SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT: By Swami Atmananda. (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chowpatty, Bombay-7, pp. 236, Rs. 10.)

Swami Atmananda (S. Neelakanta Iyer in his purvashrama, to distinguish him from other Swamis of that name) gives an authoritative account of each of the four classical margas, basing each closely on quotations from the appropriate scripture — karma yoga on the Bhagavad Gita, bhakti yoga on the Narada Bhakti Sustras, raja yoga on Patanjali's Yoga Sustras, and jnana yoga on the Brahma Sustras and Sri Shankaracharya's commentary on them. His expositions are not only authoritative but appreciative, seeing each marga from its own viewpoint and expounding it with full sympathy. This does not prevent him, however, from regarding karma marga rather as a preparatory stage for any of the other three than as a complete path in itself, or from regarding jnana marga as the most complete and far-reaching of the four.

It is a pity that he accepts as true the always dubious and now rather discredited Western hypothesis of evolution and progress in religion. He must know that Sri Krishna postulated an opposite process in the Gita.

One remarkable factual mistake in a writer who speaks of Swami Ramdas as his Guru is the statement (on page 19) that both he and Ramana Maharshi prescribed nama-japa as an initial stage in sadhana. Neither did. The Maharshi

prescribed Self-enquiry from the start and throughout, as Swami Ramdas did Nama-japa.

Nevertheless this remains a sound book to be warmly recommended.

✓
FROM MIND TO SUPERMIND, A COMMENTARY ON THE BHAGAVAD GITA: By Rohit Mehta. (Manaktalas, Bombay, pp. 200, Rs. 20.)

Among the spate of books on the Gita, this one really does treat it as a guide to sadhana, which is what, of course, it is. Reviewing it chapter by chapter, the author comments on the various modes of approach with considerable penetration. Many readers will find his interpretation both of general themes and individual verses helpful. He rightly points out that the 'Me' of the Gita does not necessarily refer to the individual Krishna and does not therefore indicate exclusively bhakti marga. For instance, he shows how it refers to the Unmanifest and Unborn in the last verse of Chapter V, dealing with the passage of death: "Having known Me as the enjoyer of sacrifices and of austerity, mighty Ruler of all worlds and Lover of all beings, he goeth to Peace."

It is unfortunate that, perhaps as a hang-over from 19th Century influences, he speaks of 'occultism' in connection with the Gita. Such passages have to be discounted.

The English is good on the whole but not impeccable. Particularly irritating is his use of the word 'verily' as though it still existed in current English. It has long been defunct.

ARTHUR OSBORNE.

GURU DEVI JANAKY MATHA: By S. Narayanaswami. (Sri Janaky Nilayam, Ganapathy Nagar, Thanjavur-1, pp. 186, price Rs. 5.)

SHASTIABDAPOORTHY SOUVENIR, 1966. (The same publisher, pp. 86, price not stated.)

Need a spiritual aspirant flee from home and seek the solitude of the forest or wander about as a sannyasin in order to attain his Goal? Is the life of a householder an obstacle to Realization? Certainly not, Sri Janaky Matha answers, in agreement with the teaching of her Sat-Guru. Sri Ramana Maharshi. This emerges clearly from the detailed biography of her (parts of which were published in our issue of January this year) written by her ardent disciple, who is also a sincere aspirant. He gives detailed descriptions of her visions of various deities, including Sri Krishna, Sri Subramania and the Lord of Tirupathi. He describes also the visits of several saints, Annaswamiar and Chatti Swamiar among them, who came to bless her; also how the Lord of Palani came on more than one occasion. He tells of her meeting with Sri Shankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam and of the visits paid by Sri Matha, alone or with her husband, sometimes accompanied by disciples, to Sri Bhagavan. Not only did Sri Bhagavan speak encouragingly to her on such occasions, but when she called on him in distress from a distance he always came to her rescue. It is interesting also to read of the impression left on her by the Mahasamadhi of Sri Bhagavan.

Apart from this, we read also of her family life with a husband who, at the time of their marriage, was more than twice her age, of her children and numerous devotees and the details of daily life at her home at Ganapathy Nagar, Thanjavur. Her husband was a doctor in government service, and this led to her travelling a good deal in India and also accompanying him to Austria.

It is interesting to note that the Sarvadhikari of our Ashram, Sri Niranjanananda Swami, compared her to a canal through which the water of life from the mighty river that is Bhagavan flows to irrigate the fields and produce a rich harvest. Her advice to women given at Sri Bhagavan's Jayanthi celebration in Bombay in 1953 is striking and testifies to her high attainment.

A companion work to this biography is the Souvenir brought out on the occasion of Sri Matha's 60th birthday (Shastiabdapoorthy) celebrated on 4th August this year. It contains well

deserved tributes by the followers of this great soul.

✓ SRI SANKARA VIJAYAM: (Published by Ganesh & Co. (Madras) P. Ltd., Madras-17. Pp. 37 + xx; price Rs. 1.50; author's name not mentioned.)

Controversy hangs round the details of the life of Sri Adi Shankara. There is a controversy over the recognition of Kanchi Kamakoti Peeta as also established by Sri Adi Shankara in addition to the four Peetas, viz., Sringeri, Dwaraka, Puri and Jothir. And the aim of the small booklet under review not only seems to be to establish it as such but also to proclaim that Sri Shankara left his mortal body at Kanchi and not elsewhere, rather than give the reader a short and unvarnished account of the monumental life of Sri Shankara in brief compass. Else it is not possible to account for the three appendices occupying nearly a third of the book giving evidence in support of the said thesis, as also the rather sketchy account of the life and work that is furnished in the other pages.

Students of Sri Bhagavan will also note the difference in the version regarding the genesis of the *Guru Sthuthi* as given in the *Ramana Noolthirattu* (*The Collected Works*) and in Chapter X of this book. Whereas in *Noolthirattu* it is stated by Sri Bhagavan that it was only as part of his answer to the challenge of the wife of Mandanamisra to expound the spiritual symbolism of sex that Sri Shankara entered into the body of a king, in this book a different version is given whereby Goddess Saraswathi Herself challenges Sri Shankara when ascending the Sarvagna Peeta before mastering the science of erotics set out in Vatsyayana's *Kama Sutra*.

The list of errata given at the end of this book is a bit too long for such a short book on a great subject. The get-up of the book also does not do justice to the good name earned by the publishers.

'SEIN'.

THE THREE PILLARS OF ZEN: By Philip Kapleau. (John Weatherhill, Tokyo, pp. 362, price £ 3-3-0.)

This practical book on what Zen means and how to practise it is an important milestone in Western literature on Zen. It is written by an American who has himself undergone the traditional training in Japan for at least ten years and has attained in some depth what is called satori (or Zen enlightenment).

Part One is a full course of private instructions by Yasutani Roshi on Zen practice. They cover what you do and why. The 'why' has been add-

ed by a Roshi for the first time, because he was dealing with Western students. It deals with the control of body, breath and mind which is essential for any form of meditation. It describes for the first time in English the Soto Zen practice of sitting in full awareness (Shikentaza), and gives full details of the other practices common to both Rinzai and Soto Zen.

Part Two is a lecture (teisho) on the koan 'Mu' and gives the reader some insight into the early stages of work on a koan.

Part Three contains verbatim accounts of private interviews (dokusan or sanzen) between the Roshi and some of his American students in training. This enables one to see for the first time how Zen speaks to the American mind with its Western angle of approach.

Part Four represents the theory and shows the result to which the Zen discipline leads. It consists of a sermon on the One Mind by Bassui (14th Century) and ten letters to his disciples which stress his simple method of training and all point to the One Mind.

Parts Five and Six contain the personal accounts of how five Western and five Japanese Zen students achieved various depths of satori through the discipline detailed in Parts One, Two and Three. They are first hand, extremely moving and all of interest.

There are two short appendices, one showing the ten Oxherding Pictures with a fresh translation of the text and commentary, the other being line drawings of the various sitting postures. The author's general introduction and a special one to each of the parts are written by some one who has done it all himself, so that the book comes to life and is tied together into a whole.

This is the best book yet to be published in English on the theory and practice of Zen.

It should be mentioned, however, that the school of which Yasutani Roshi is the head represents a unique mixture of Soto and Rinzai Zen, so that it is more or less disowned by both schools. It leans heavily on the Chinese maxim of 'beating into enlightenment'. This is a dangerous technique which knocks some unripe fruit off the tree. The other schools insist that the fruit should be allowed to ripen naturally before it falls.

G. J. YORKE.

A PSYCHIATRIST DISCOVERS INDIA: By Medard Boss. (Oswald Wolff, London, 1965, pages 192, price 31s 6d. Indian Agent, Rupa, Bombay, Rs. 21.)

Recent books on India — like those by N. C. Choudhury, Ronald Segal and Naipaul — have

been lopsided and gloomy, because they either ignored altogether or failed to understand the other India, the India of the sages where the ancient wisdom still survives. The present book is a pleasant surprise, all the greater because the author is a well-known psychotherapist and a leader of the continental movement in existential psychology which insists on the *Will-to-meaning*.

Dr. Boss felt the call of India because he was seized with questions to which he had no answer and was convinced that he would find them in India. In a sense, therefore, Dr. Boss provides an adequate and authoritative answer to Koestler's summary disposal of Asia in the *Lotus and the Robot*.

What were the questions which troubled the writer's mind? As a practising psychotherapist, he had come to perceive that though his science worked well up to a point and produced results, it suffered from some very obvious inadequacies. It threw little light on the essential nature of man, which indeed should have been its central aim. It had erected a host of conceptual notions such as the *id*, the *libido*, the unconscious and the *super-ego* which, though they could be exploited for practical purposes, provided no real insight into the inner processes of the mind. They were like mathematical symbols which have practical utility but hardly any meaning. Why was it so, he asked, and concluded that the methods of the physical sciences which the psychologists in the West had come increasingly to adopt were to blame. These methods, based as they are on the subject-object relationship, could hardly be expected to light up the essential man. *Vijnataram are kena vijaniyat?* How is the knower to be known? This then was the reason for the inherent failure of the science of psychology.

And so he came to India searching for the wise in whose living contact he could learn the secret 'knowing which all else is known'. And fortunately the endeavours of this earnest seeker were richly rewarded. The book is an account of his impressions and experiences gathered in the course of his two visits to India, which for the sake of presenting a compact narrative have been merged into one. Though the central interest must naturally lie in his encounters with the teachers, especially the venerable scholar-philosopher of Benares whom he sought and met, the author has also produced an absorbing travelogue. His vignettes of persons and places are vivid and finely rendered. His observations as a psychotherapist about the social and family

institutions of the Hindus and the strains and tensions produced by the economic changes taking place in India today are highly suggestive, though disputable here and there.

The talks with the teachers cover a wide field, affording sidelights on a number of related questions and converging in the end on the central teaching — that there can be no conceptualizing the essential truth about man; it has to be directly apprehended, a point which Bhagavan, as the readers of *The Mountain Path* know, never tired of emphasizing. While western psychotherapy "may enable the patient to become aware of his aggressive animal drives" and to some extent "control them", it is Dr. Boss's discovery in India that "eastern psychotherapy could successfully work the miracle of freeing him from evil."

A. L. TIWARI.

✓ **PSYCHOTHERAPY AND MEDITATION:** By Jack Huber. (Gollancz, price 18s.)

In this short but significant book the author, who is an experienced American psychiatrist, describes in detail five days of intensive Zen training under a Japanese Rōshi of the Soto sect. Though Dr. Huber had for some years been interested in Eastern methods of self-discipline and meditation, this was his first practical experience of it. The training was fairly severe, the pupil's application thorough, and the result was, on the last day of the course, an experience of *Kensho*. The Rōshi confirmed that the pupil had succeeded in Zen and seen into his own Nature. Dr. Huber describes briefly the beneficent effects upon his own personality and considers what light his experience throws upon Western psychiatric practice.

Enlightenment in five days? And, seemingly, without any bitter struggle or lengthy preparation. It all stands far too easy. In fact it is a sincere story told with becoming clarity and modesty; perfectly serious, it deserves to be taken seriously. This is especially so when it is read along with other recent American accounts of Enlightenment experiences in Japan contained in Kapleau's important 'Three Pillars of Zen'. A spiritual movement of great promise is getting under way.

The crucial thing is that these Japanese and American seekers, suitably encouraged by the Rōshi, go into training (whatever the period: it may be even less than five days) expecting success. If the pupil does not see into his own Nature before the end of the course he has failed to do what he intended. But next time he will

surely do so! And successes are apparently not at all rare, even among beginners like Dr. Huber.

How sharply this contrasts with the conviction, too common in Western spiritual circles, that Enlightenment is virtually impossible in this life, even if one were to devote the rest of one's days to the most arduous practice. Perhaps in one's next life, or after a hundred lives, but anyway not now! The truth, however, is that anyone who is serious about Enlightenment wants it right away. No one who is really interested in seeing into his own Nature is prepared to put off looking even for one day. These Soto students are serious. They want something; they believe that it is instantly available; they get it.

And because they are serious they are prepared to pay the price in boredom and fatigue and physical pain. They are willing to stop reading and arguing and thinking about spiritual matters, and instead humbly to accept a severe psycho-physical discipline. The chatterbox mind, the discursive intellect, and above all opinions of any sort, have to be stilled; moreover positive energy has to be built up in *zazen* to make the breakthrough. Precise instructions are given. The whole approach is practical and with a minimum of theory. This might be expected to appeal to the American's pragmatic sense and evoke his energy: interested in results, he gets them.

Well, what are these results? Of course they vary immensely in depth and scope, from the comparatively common brief glimpse of Who one is to the full Enlightenment itself. Much depends upon the motive: if one takes up Zen (or any other) meditation as a sideline or for a limited period, nothing much of permanence can be expected from it. But if, because one is in desperate trouble, one comes to devote one's whole energy to seeking the peace and joy of Enlightenment, lasting results are more likely. Best of all, if one is impatient for the Truth, if one is really interested in seeing Who one is and determined to do so without further delay, then speedy success is more likely.

Dr. Huber is wisely brief and necessarily vague about his own *kensho*. Very likely he would agree that it was comparatively shallow, since it did not proceed from any ardent and sustained desire to see into his own Nature. In any case, he is careful to point out that *kensho*, though it is true Enlightenment, (and in a sense ultimate) needs to be extended and matured throughout the rest of one's life by patient self-discipline. In the practice of the Soto sect this means keeping up one's *zazen* (or sitting meditation) every day and gradually bringing the whole

of one's life up to its level. In the end nothing occurs to break one's 'meditation'.

It would be interesting to know how many of those who obtain *kensho* under the guidance of contemporary soto masters go on to mature their Enlightenment to the limit and how many let it lapse till it is little more than a memory. It is a pity when this happens: but it is better to have seen and then gone blind than never to have seen at all. Suffering may be counted upon to open our Eye again.

THE MEANING OF PERSONAL EXISTENCE:

By Arthur W. Osborn. (Sidgwick & Jackson, price 35s.)

Western civilization is based upon a very shaky foundation — the conviction that each of us is a separate and inviolable self, quite distinct now and for ever from all other selves. This proposition will not stand up to examination. Nevertheless, seeing that few of us are philosophers and nearly all of us have deeply engrained this feeling of our separate selfhood, we go on living as if it were true. We ignore every indication to the contrary, including the massive experience of the religious East, and also the anxiety and pain and indeed madness which undermine the self that barricades itself against invasion by every other self. Philosophically and psychologically and practically, the separate-self doctrine does not work. And, if further evidence against it is needed, there occur all sorts of well tested paranormal phenomena which can only be accounted for on the theory that, below the surface, our island selves merge into great continental selves and, at the level of the ocean floor itself, they are all One.

Mr. Arthur W. Osborn (not to be confused with the editor of *The Mountain Path*, whose name is spelt differently, having an 'e' at the end) examines in detail the evidence for telepathy, clairvoyance, clairsaudience, veridical dreams, precognition, hauntings, phantasms of the living and dead, psychometry, 'PK', materialisations, astral projection, automatic writing, cross-correspondences, and memories of past lives. A great deal of this material has been investigated by competent researchers and pronounced genuine, but even if only a fraction of it were admitted, that would be enough to make nonsense of the commonsense doctrine of immiscible selves. It all points to the unity of Mind. Anyone who doubts this is recommended to read Mr. Osborn's book. Besides giving a conspectus of para-normal phenomena, he explores their metaphysical implications at length, with parti-

cular reference to the nature of personal existence and the doctrine of reincarnation. These matters are commonly the concern of people who are inclined to start upon the path to the One, but for some reason have not got going. Mr. Osborn could help them to move.

As for those who are already on that path, these researches and speculations are so many red herrings. The trouble is that there is no end to them: the arguments will go on *ad infinitum*. If we are genuinely desirous of Self-knowledge we shall waste no time puzzling over the problems of selfhood, survival, reincarnation, and the rest. In fact, they are pseudo-problems: the only way to clear them up is to ignore them and turn to the question to whom they occur. Our true Self finds no problems.

DOUGLAS HARDING.

THE LIFE OF SARIPUTTA: By Nyanaponika Thera. (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Ceylon, pp. 112, no price.)

Sariputta and Moggallana (to give the Pali forms of their names) were famous as Buddha's two leading disciples. If they play no part in the fashioning of the Sangha, it is because they both passed away before him. The present account of Sariputta is based closely on the original texts. It illustrates the nobility of character and consideration for (non-existent) others of this great saint. Incidentally it also, by the way, as it were, gives a revealing picture of the spiritual and intellectual climate in the environment of the Buddha.

BUDDHISM, THE RELIGION OF ANALYSIS: By Nolan Pliny Jacobson. (Allen & Unwin, pp. 202, price 25s.)

Man everywhere is warped by conditioning into the particular culture-pattern in which he lives. The deepest and most harmful part of this conditioning is his belief in himself as a separate individual being. On the one hand this leads to ego assertion, while on the other it makes a man passive to pressures and vulnerable to suffering. The present work regards Buddhism as the earliest and most far-reaching system of psychotherapy freeing those who follow it wisely and ruthlessly from these compulsions. Other systems of psycho-therapy deal with social conditioning, but Buddhism alone shows the way to dissolve the really basic illusion of an individual being. The author therefore proposes it as a much needed therapy for the modern West and especially as a technique for study and practice by psychiatrists. Alluding to philosophy, he

speaks of Buddha as the real founder of Existentialism, but he holds mainly to the view that Buddhism is not a doctrine but a system of therapy.

But if individual being does not exist, what does? Blank nothingness? In the most interesting chapter of his book, entitled 'The Consummatory Experience', the author marshals the evidence of leading interpreters of Buddhism to show that this is misunderstanding. Nibbana, meaning extinction of egoism, is beyond conceptual thought and therefore cannot be described or defined; but it is to be experienced, and Buddhism shows the way to this.

BODHICHITTA.

SPIRITUALITY THROUGH THE CENTURIES, ASCETICS AND MYSTICS OF THE WESTERN CHURCH: Edited and Introduced by James Walsh S.J. (Burns & Oates, pp. 342, price 25s.)

This symposium on Catholic saints and mystics concentrates primarily on their writing and influence, treating their personal lives as secondary, though important. It therefore contains much solid fare and never becomes cloying. Some may find the constant emphasis on the superiority of the celibate and monastic life overdone; however the obvious answer is that these are the people who have shaped the teaching and development of the Catholic Church and that a similar list could not have been drawn up from among the laity, despite their far greater numbers.

In some cases there has been a tendency to bypass the more outstanding saints and take less known ones instead — for instance, instead of St. Francis of Assisi his female counterpart, St. Clare; instead of St. John of the Cross or St. Theresa of Avila their forerunner St. Bernardino de Lareda. Since mention is made of the greater figures, that only broadens the picture. Some of the great pivotal figures are dealt with, such as St. Benedict and St. Bernard. Since the subjects are taken in chronological order, the book adds up to a very fine and informative sidelight on the spiritual history of the Catholic Church.

However, a distressing feature about an otherwise exhilarating book is the nervous anxiety many of the writers show to prove that their subjects are not heretics, even though mystics. What is still more ominous is the care a number of the mystics themselves had to take; and even then Eckhart was adjudged outside the pale and St. John of the Cross spent a number of years

in prison and had his early manuscripts destroyed and later ones meddled with before he was finally vindicated. One gets the impression that it has been a very risky thing for a Catholic to be a mystic.

SAGITTARIUS.

ARE THE GATHAS PRE-VEDIC? and THE AGE OF ZARATHUSHTRA. (pp. 115, price Rs. 7.50.)

IS THE SO-CALLED YOUNGER AVESTA REALLY YOUNGER? (pp. 96, price Rs. 6.50.)

THE ARYAN ECLIPTIC CYCLE. (pp. 384, price Rs. 25.)

(All three books by H. S. Spencer, published by H. P. Vaswani, Poona-2.)

It is really very difficult to review books of this nature where the author endeavours to prove preconceived ideas. All three subjects are highly technical and require specialised qualifications.

Vedic Sanskrit and Gathic Avesta are sister languages. The oldest portions of the Rig Veda and the oldest portions of the Gathas may be contemporaneous. Just as the oldest portions of the Vedas are separated from the later portions by centuries, so are the Gathas from the later Avesta. The first of the books listed above only repeats old theories and actually proves nothing. The claim that it settles once and for all the very difficult problems of the age of Zarathushtra and the Gathas is not tenable.

It would have been better if the author had given the second book the title 'References to Zarathushtra in the Later Avesta'. How can he presume to write on the subject when his guru stopped him from studying the Avesta, the language of the scriptures he writes about, trying to prove things based on imagination? The book contains quotations from other books and there is nothing very original in it.

The author has a right to put forward his own hypothetical theories on the subject of the third book, but the conclusions he arrives at are amazingly heterodox, confusing and contradictory.

FRAMROZE A. BODE.

OTHER BOOKS

STHITA-PRAJNA: By R. N. Agrawal, (Ganesh & Co., Madras-17, pp. 16, price 0.50 Paise.)

This little booklet is a translation of the famous passage comprised by verses 54 to 72 of the second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita.

We have also received an abridged edition of a larger Gujarati original entitled 'On the Way to Harmony' or 'Nationalism in the Context of Civilization' by 'Prabhakar'.

Sri Champaklal (for a reference to whom see *Ashram Bulletin* of this issue) has kindly sent us a collection of books written by him in Gujarathi.

PERIODICAL

A new English quarterly under the title of 'Santi Dipam' is being published by the Rama Sakti Mission, Mangalore, from Ahmednagar and will be appearing every January, April, July and October. The first issue contains a fairly wide assortment of articles, including one by the Mother Sri Rama Devi on 'The Personal and the Impersonal'.

MISREPRESENTATION (1)

In *Viveka*, the journal of the 'Yoga Esoteric Ashram' of Manchester, we find regrettable misrepresentation of the teaching of Raman Maharshi. In answer to the question: "What is meant by the term 'the direct way'?" it is stated: "It is a conception of the Rishi Maharshi Ramana. It involves very special exercises in concentration which lead in a stage by stage way to Samadhi or Bliss. The Maharshi did not insist on any posture except that the spine must be straight and the head balanced exactly on top of it. By learning to concentrate first on a small object for ten minutes, the pupil went through even more difficult exercises, till at last he was capable of extending pure consciousness into limitless space, thereby discovering his true nature....."

This is quite wrong. The Maharshi never taught any "very special exercises" or any "stage by stage way". He never told any one to "concentrate first on a small object". Such statements smack of occultism, than which nothing could be farther from his direct, purely spiritual teaching. No corroboration whatever will be found for them in his *Collected Works* or in any of the published collections of his talks with followers. A stage by stage way is by very definition indirect. The Maharshi's way is direct because it goes directly, with no stages or special exercises, to the heart of the matter — who am I? What is it that sits, thinks, seeks, meditates? What is the reality, the self, the I-ness, the being of this 'me'? He taught Self-enquiry as the one essential exercise from the beginning of

the quest to its end. "This is the direct method. All other methods are practised while retaining the ego and therefore many doubts arise and the ultimate question still remains to be tackled in the end. But in this method the final question is the only one and is raised from the very beginning."¹ He distinguished it carefully from meditation on anything, and he certainly never recommended concentration on a small object. "Meditation requires an object to meditate on, whereas in Self-enquiry there is only the subject and no object."¹ Even the statement that he insisted on sitting with a straight spine is misleading. It is doubtless helpful to do so in any system of meditation, but on the informal and purely inner path of the Maharshi such outer aids are less important than on other paths. Indeed, he sometimes told people that they should continue Self-enquiry all the time and not only while sitting in meditation. When asked once what was the best posture (asana) for meditation, he replied with characteristic indifference to physical aids: "One-pointedness of mind is the best posture."²

Also misleading is the use of the past tense. The direct path is not something of the past but is still living and widely followed.

We have the utmost sympathy for *Viveka* and for the Ashram it represents. We are cheered by the emergence of all such new strivings and beginnings where a few aspirants come together to seek a path to the Light amid the darkness of the materialistic world. We send them and also the 'Yoga Society' of Leeds, which is mentioned in *Viveka*, our earnest good wishes. But we do request any who come across divergent statements of the Maharshi's teaching, as they must have done, either to check them up carefully against his *Collected Works* and published volumes of talks to see whether there is any ground for them or to write to his Ashram at Tiruvannamalai or to *The Mountain Path*, which is its authorised mouthpiece, for confirmation of them.

MISREPRESENTATION—2

A book called '*Reminiscences and Anecdotes of Sri Aurobindo*' has been compiled by M. P. Pandit and published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. We are not reviewing it, and indeed it has not been sent to us for review; but two items about Sri Maharshi in it, both on p. 101,

¹ *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own words*, Ch. V.

² *Ibid.*, ch. VI.

have been brought to our notice and we feel obliged to correct them, since they are incorrect both in detail and (what is more serious) in spirit.

The first runs as follows :

Do you know the famous story about the Maharshi when, being disgusted with the Ashram and the disciples, he was going away into the mountains ? He was passing through a narrow path flanked by the hill. He came upon an old woman sitting with her legs across the path. The Maharshi begged her to draw her legs (sic) but she would not. Then in anger he passed over her. She then became very angry and said, "Why are you so restless ? Why can't you sit in one place at Arunachala instead of moving about ? Go back to your place and worship Siva there."

Her remarks struck him and he retraced his steps. After going some distance he looked back and found that there was nobody. Suddenly it struck him that it was the Divine Mother herself who wanted him to remain at Arunachala.

Of course it was the Divine Mother who asked him to go back.

The true story, which Bhagavan told a number of times, is quite different. It is well remembered by a number of devotees and is told by A. Devaraja Mudaliar on pages 14-15 of '*Day by Day with Bhagavan*', vol. II. Bhagavan was not disgusted with the Ashram or disciples. In fact it happened when he was a young man living in a cave on Arunachala before there was an Ashram. He was not intending to leave Arunachala. The old woman was not sitting with her legs across the path. He did not get angry. He did not say that the old woman must be the Divine Mother. In fact, 'the Divine Mother' is an expression which was not in his vocabulary. What happened is that he was roaming about the hill when an old Harijan woman greeted him with the semi-jocular curse common among such people, meaning literally : 'May your boly be put on the funeral pyre' and added : "Why can't you stay quiet in one place ?" As reported by Devaraja Mudaliar, Sri Maharshi said merely that it was good advice. As recollected by some others, he said afterwards : "How do we know who she

was ? She may have been Sri Arunachala in human form."

The following is the second anecdote :

Mrs. Kelly went to see the Maharshi and was seen driving mosquitoes (sic) at the time of meditation. She complained to him about mosquito bites. The Maharshi told her that if she could not bear mosquito bites she could not do yoga. Mrs. Kelly could not understand the significance of the statement. She wanted spirituality without mosquitoes.

This is quite contrary to the spirit of Sri Maharshi's teaching. Moreover the expression 'do yoga' was not in his vocabulary. A case of his being asked about driving mosquitoes away is recorded, with his reply, by Devaraja Mudaliar in '*Day by Day with Bhagavan*', vol. I, p. 13. His reply was :

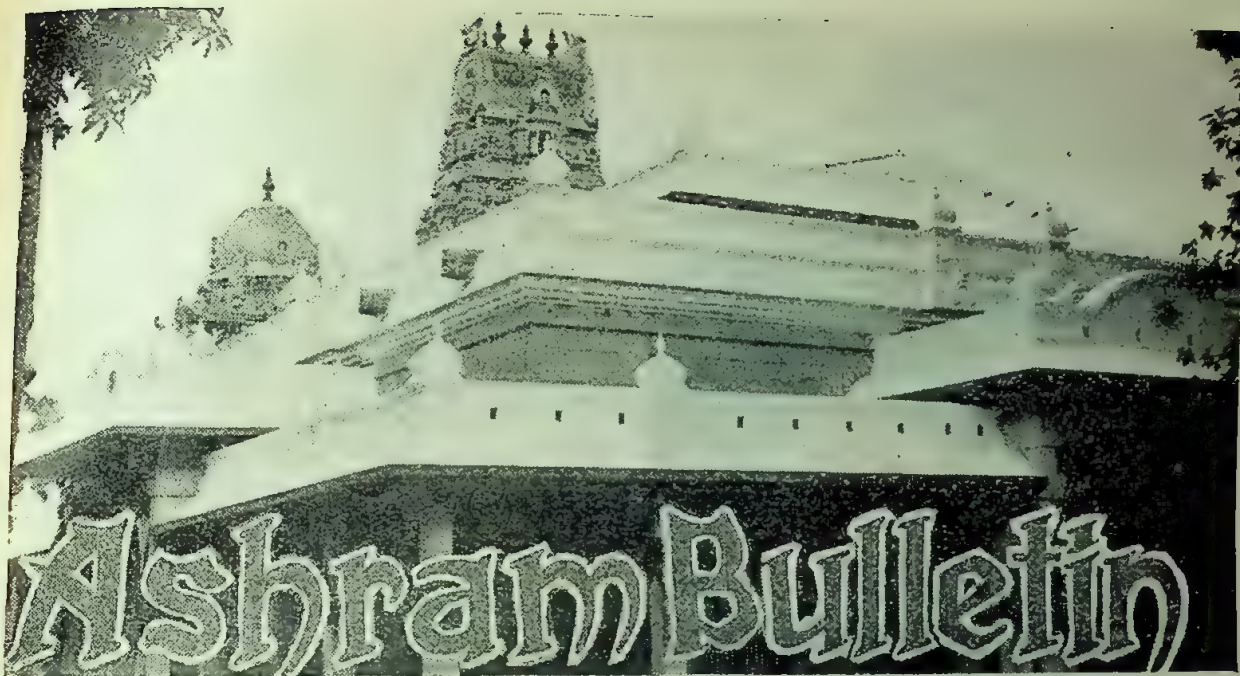
You must do as you find most convenient. You will not attain Mukti simply because you refrain from driving away the mosquitoes, nor be denied Mukti simply because you drive them away. The thing is to attain one-pointedness and then to attain manonasa. Whether you do this by putting up with the mosquito bites or driving the mosquitoes away is left to you. If you are completely absorbed in your meditation you will not know that the mosquitoes are biting you. Till you attain that stage why should you not drive them away ?

This reply is completely in the spirit of Sri Maharshi's teaching. The editor of '*The Mountain Path*' was in the hall when it was given and remembers it exactly as Devaraja Mudaliar records it.

It is of the utmost importance that stories circulated about Sri Maharshi should represent his teachings and personality accurately. Misrepresentations can do much harm, even though quite unintentional, as we are sure these must be. We therefore request any one who wishes to publish such to submit them first to his Ashram for verification.

Let each one search his whole way of life with all care, considering his interior soul and whether anything dwells therein that is not God. This preparation will consist of four dispositions : detachment, self-renunciation, the interior spirit and union with God.

— BLESSED JOHN TAULER



ADMINISTRATION

An interesting development is that resident devotees have been drawn into the running of the Ashram by the formation of a number of sub-committees to help the President with his work. There is one for maintenance of the premises (in which Bhagavan's tradition of cleanliness is still maintained), one for publications, library and literary work, one for the dispensary and medical work, one for guest rooms and guest houses and one for the care of visitors.

READING ROOM

The Ashram receives a large number of religious and philosophical journals. A reading room has now been arranged where residents and visitors can peruse them. They can also take them to their quarters for limited periods. Our premises are still too cramped to allow a separate room for the purpose, so the 'Mountain Path' office is at present being used. However, it is intended to construct a separate detached building for 'The Mountain Path' and when that is done the present office should remain available.

M. C. Subramaniam and V. Krishna Iyer have kindly volunteered to take charge of the reading room and the lending and cataloguing of periodicals.

"MOUNTAIN PATH" NEWS

Our next issue is to be on 'The Question of Suffering', that of April on 'Effort, Grace and Destiny'. The remaining two issues for 1967 are to be on 'Yoga' and 'The Ethical Basis of the

Quest'. The January issue is already full up, but contributions for the other three are invited.

Readers will have observed that we often fill up the space at the end of an article with quotations from saints and mystics. I should be grateful to any reader who would send a supply of these that he has noted down in his reading.

We now have an agent for Canada also. The address is given elsewhere on this issue.

ROVING AMBASSADOR

Dr. V. N. Sharma of Madras is going abroad for a year to lecture on Hindu religious developments (and mainly on Bhagavan Sri Ramanan) in Switzerland, Germany, Holland and Israel. As usual, he came to the Ashram to take leave of Bhagavan before going. He will go as representative of 'The Mountain Path' and contact many of our friends abroad. May Bhagavan guide and support him in his work. Dr. Sharma is the father of Gita Sharma, whose article on the mudras appear elsewhere in this issue.



Dr. Sharma

A CONCERT

On 18th July the famous sitarist Ustad Halim Jaffar Khan from Bombay paid a visit to the



Ustad Halim Jaffar Khan

Ashram at the instance of Sri A. R. Narayana Rao, a staunch devotee in Madras. He gave a

wonderful sitar recital lasting nearly three hours. The old hall was packed and everybody sat spellbound. His *alap*, *bistar*, *tala* and *gat* were perfect. He was brilliantly accompanied on the tabla by Pandit Sadashiv Pawar, making the whole concert very enjoyable.

We were delighted to hear from the Ustad that he was a devotee of Sri Bhagavan and had been thinking of coming here for the past ten years. He promised to visit the Ashram again whenever he gets an opportunity.

We wish him every success. May he have the blessings of Bhagavan.

BHAJAN

Sri Parmanandswarup Champaklal of Bombay visited the Ashram with a party of 17 from Secunderabad on August 7th and stayed for four days. On each day they gave a bhajan in the Old Hall. The hall was packed and the bhajan, which at times became ecstatic, was highly appreciated.



Sri Champaklal is seen in the centre, to the left of the Ashram President, Venkatoo.

Sri Champaklal visited the Ashram a few years back, although he never came in the lifetime of Bhagavan. His guru, Sri Narayana Swami, did and instructed him too to come here and invoke the blessings of Bhagavan, but he arrived too late; Bhagavan had already left the body. Although only 49, he has already a large following in Bombay, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Calcutta, where he conducts bhajan in his native Gujarati and Hindi. He has visited a number of highly reputed spiritual leaders and received their blessings, among them Swami Nityananda, Sri Hans Mahāraj, Ananda Mayi Ma and Daya Mata of the Self-Realization Fellowship of California. He is still eager to meet saints and mystics. He himself has written books in Gujarati on the Gita and on bhakti marga. He is essentially a bhakta. While staying here he said to our Managing Editor:

"Prem, love, is the basic force, whichever marga you follow. Without it, what use is it to sit for hours in meditation or bhajan or yoga? As long as body-consciousness remains, Prem alone can give you peace and progress. The ego is routed when the spring of Prem gushes out. Such elimination of the ego results naturally in the supreme state of samadhi. Sadhana has no meaning if not based on Prem. Singing kirtan or bhajan is an additional aid; it is a powerful and simple means which any one can use. Your whole being is concentrated on the singing and listening, so that the other three senses become numb. If prolonged, even those two senses are numbed, resulting in samadhi, the sense-free state. Though by no means the final state, this gives an intimation of it. The Guru is Prem; his whole body emits Prem ceaselessly. That is why all sorts of people, irrespective of their walk of life, enjoy peace in the presence of a holy man. Prem not only makes it easier for you to reach God but facilitates His reaching you too. All saints and seers, whichever marga they may have taught, have had one unique feature in common, and that is Prem. Look at Ramana, Ramakrishna, Jnaneshwar, Mira, Tukaram or any other: they were all primarily the embodiment of Love. Neither philosophy nor asceticism but only Love can enable you really to understand the teaching of the Guru, for only in Love do you lose your ego-sense. Prem or Love is like the string in a necklace: without it there will be only scattered gems. Prem is the path and Prem the Goal."

Sri Champaklal and his party fitted so harmoniously into the Ashram life, that when they left many of us felt that it was some of our own

people who were leaving us. May they carry Bhagavan's blessings with them.

UPANAYANAM

Sri P. S. Easwaran, a devotee and a member of the Prem Sangh described in our issue of July 1964 (not the Prof. Easwaran who sometimes contributes articles to *The Mountain Path*) came here for a few days stay with his family and relatives and on 10th July celebrated the upanayanam of his son Ch. Bhavani Shanker in the Ashram. Devotees and sadhus blessed the boy and wished him prosperity, knowledge and wisdom. May Sri Bhagavan's blessings be on him and his parents and relatives and friends.

PROF. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN

Prof. T. M. P. Mahadevan, head of the philosophy department of Madras University (for a note on whom see page 198 of our issue of Oct. 1964), was invited as a member of a select cultural group to Greece where he found very highly placed persons interested in Bhagavan and his teachings.



Prof. Mahadevan

He visited the Ashram on 14 August and gave us an account of his travels. 15 August is a holiday when many people come here (as explained on page 257 of our *Ashram Bulletin* of Oct. 1964). Since it fell on a Monday this year, it allowed two free days for visitors. Prof. Mahadevan not only came himself but was accompanied by some two dozen members of the Sankara Vihar, which he has organized in Madras. They followed a planned routine of bhajan, meditation and talks during their visit here.

Prof. Mahadevan wrote in the Visitors Book:—
"These two days have been a home-coming for me. This particular visit had a special significance in that 26 members of the Sankara Vihar held a spiritual refresher meeting at the Ashram. The Ashram is filled with the serene Presence of Bhagavan The serenity and precision with which the daily work of the Ashram is carried on, the open-hearted sympathy and welcome which awaits every devotee, and above all the sense of constant dedication which is observable

in every detail of activity have helped to preserve the Ashram as a true abode of sanctified spiritual peace."

ARUNAGIRINATHAR FESTIVAL

There were many other visitors also for these two days (Aug. 14 & 15). There were several bhajan parties. Notable among them was that of Sri Krishna Iyer whose remarkable vision of Bhagavan at such a bhajan on a previous occasion is related on page 61 of our *Ashram Bulletin* of Jan. 1965.

GOPURAM

Monday, 22nd August, was an auspicious day when the work of constructing the gopuram or tower over the samadhi or shrine of Sri Bhagavan was inaugurated in the morning with Vedic rites. Work on the stone roofing of the samadhi mantap is nearing completion, and work on the gopuram is being taken up hand in hand with this in order to speed up the completion of the samadhi building and performance of the kumbhabhishekam or consecration. Our sthpathi architect, Sri S. K. Achary, tells us that the gopuram should be completed within four months.

The response to our appeal issued early this year for funds for the completion of this work has been fairly satisfactory so that we now have collected a sum of Rs. 13,000/- out of the total Rs. 25,000/- needed to complete the work. We earnestly appeal to devotees to make their contribution in favour of "Sri Ramana Mantapa Nidhi", so as to hasten the installation of the lingam and the commencement of regular pujas at the mantapam.

On the same auspicious day the inaugural ceremony was held for the construction of a proper samadhi in place of the present wood and bamboo structure over the grave of the Sarvadhikari, Sri Niranjanananda Swami, to whose dedicated work and administrative ability the Ashram owes so much. We hope, with the co-operation of the devotees, to finish this also in good time.

The functions were well attended by Ashram residents and devotees. Sri V. Seshadri from Calcutta was also there and quite a group of visiting devotees from Bombay, including: Dr. and Mrs. K. B. Pispati, and Mr. and Mrs. Bobby Capadia. Sthpathi S. K. Achary was, of course, present.



The group photo taken on the occasion: The Ashram President, Sri S. K. Achary, the Sthpathi, Mrs. Taleyarkhan and Mr. Arthur Osborne are among the gathering of devotees.

OUR DELHI KENDRA

VISITORS

Sri Kesavadasji of Dasasramam, Bangalore, has been giving a series of Harikathas (musical discourses) in Delhi drawing large, appreciative audiences. Included in his repertoire is 'Self Realisation', the theme of which is the life of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. According to Sri Kesavadasji, it would be more correct to say that Bhagavan is himself self-realisation than that a lad named Venkataraman attained self-realisation, for the Maharshi embodies the ultimate experience of all saints and seers.



Photograph taken at Sri Kesavadasji's discourse at Ramana Kendra, Delhi on July 3, 1966. *Left to Right*: (1) Sri C. Ramaswamy, Vice-President, (2) Sri Kesavadasji, (3) Prof. K. Swaminathan, Secretary, (4) Sri K. C. Subbiah, Joint Secretary of the Ramana Kendra.

PALAKOLE

The Jnanotsavam of Bhagavan Sri Ramana was celebrated at Murali Krishna Ashram, Palakole, West Godavari District, on 18th July. In the morning Astotharanama Puja to Sri Bhagavan was performed by the devotees Sarraz Narasimharao and V. Narasimham. In the evening, with the latter, a prominent businessman of the place, presiding, the former explained Bhagavan's teaching on rebirth and how to transcend it in this very lifetime. He appealed to the assembled devotees to follow Bhagavan's teaching closely by banishing egoism. The meeting closed with distribution of Bhagavan's prasadam to all there.

KOLHAPUR

The sixteenth Mahanirvana Day of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated by the Dharma-Tattvajnana Mandal on 18th April. There was bhajan, prayer and meditation, and Sri Tukaram Patil spoke on 'Self-Surrender'.

Surya Prakash is a Sindhi merchant who had to move to Bombay after Partition. He has been here a number of times before, both during Bhagavan's lifetime and since. Indeed, we have an article of his pending in our 'How I came to the Maharshi' series. (And the editor takes this opportunity to apologize to all those whose articles in this series are still pending. It is only in the present issue that he has found room for his own.) This time Sri Surya Prakash was accompanied by Sri Swami Arjandas Naraindas.



Surya Prakash

Swami Arjandas Naraindas comes from a distinguished family of Sindhi saints. Himself

humble and devoted by nature, the Swami presides over an institution at Kurla, a suburb of Bombay, comprising three temples in one: Lakshmi Narain Mandir, Shiv Mandir and Guru Nanak Darbar. He is not only well versed in Vedic lore but also a keen student of the Granth Sahib, the Sikh Holy Book. He has devotees in hundreds. Having heard about Sri Ramanashram in talking with a devotee, he changed



Swami Arjandas Naraindas

his original programme of going to Brindaban and instead came here. He found the atmosphere here most tranquil and peace-giving, and this made a deep impression on him. He was further impressed by the quiet and unobtrusive way the management went about its day-to-day work, leaving the devotees free in every way to carry on their sadhana.

He settled down while here to a serious study and practice of Bhagavan's method of Self-enquiry, which he found to give an effective edge to his usual spiritual practices. He left with a feeling that his three week stay here had been of considerable benefit to him.

Maurice Frydman, a very old devotee, paid us one of his rare but always welcome visits. He comes originally from Poland. He worked with Gandhi for many years, and it was Gandhi who gave him the name of *Bharatananda* under which we published some reminiscences by him in our special Jayanti issue of January this year. He was accompanied by Mrs. Petit, a notable Parsi lady of Bombay.

Artists. Among foreign visitors the accent was rather on art this time. The Italian artist Paolo Tommasi paid us a short visit while returning from an exhibition of his paintings in Japan. He left with the intention of returning for a longer stay.



Frانيا, with her painting of Arunachala, as seen from the rear of the Ashram.

Frانيا Osborne, the younger daughter of our editor, who is an art student of the Camberwell School of Art in London, arrived here for her summer vacation. She was brought up here and is known to some of the older devotees as 'Noona', the name by which Bhagavan knew her. Before leaving she held an exhibition in the Ashram of the paintings she has done here. It was highly appreciated.

Prof. M. L. Sondhi, Head of the Department of

International Politics and Organization at the 'Indian School of International Studies' in New Delhi, came with his wife and young son. We found him a dynamic person and he brought us some interesting new contacts.

Before leaving he wrote in the Visitors Book: "My wife Shrimati Madhuri, our little son Shivaji and I regard our visit to Sri Ramanasramam as an occasion to renew our link with the source of dynamic values for all our activities. It is here that the message for blending tradition and modernity in the lives of all Indians in particular and mankind in general can be heard with powerful clarity. It is no exaggeration when I say that the dignity of Gothic Europe, the mystic beauty of Jerusalem, the rhythmic grandeur of the Himalayas, are all excelled here."

BOMBAY RECOLLECTIONS

We were expecting another visit from Sunil Damania, who was so helpful to Mr. and Mrs. Osborne during their stay in Bombay in February, but he has not been able to come, as his mother, who was to accompany him, had a mild heart attack. She is recovered but still has to be careful about travelling. His brother Jagdish has long been settled here as a sadhu.

Sunil writes that all is well at Gurudev Ashram, the Ashram of Swami Muktananda (for whom see our *Ashram Bulletin* of January this year) at Ganeshpuri outside Bombay, where Mr. and Mrs. Osborne paid a brief visit in February and were very hospitably received. It was a festival day and streams of visitors were arriving from Bombay. The Ashram is a flourishing institution with modern guest houses and well kept gardens, all under the personal supervision of the Swami, who seems a dynamo of energy.

Less than a mile away is the shrine of Swami Nityananda (for whom see articles in our issues of April 1965 and April 1966). The spiritual influence felt there is very powerful.

A NORTH INDIAN PILGRIMAGE

Our lifelong devotee Mallikarjunan, brother of our post-master Raja Iyer, and assistant to Sri Narasaiah in the bookstall, writes as follows of his pilgrimage.

"For some years past I had been intending to make a pilgrimage in the North, but it was only this year that, by the Grace of Bhagavan, I was able to do so. After doing archanas to Sri Aruna-

chala and Sri Ramana, I walked round the Hill with my family and thus imbibed the blessing of

Sri Arunachala-Ramana. On the following day we performed yatra-puja at our house. The Ashram President kindly gave us introductory letters to devotees in various parts of North India and we set forth on our pilgrimage.

In New Delhi we were well looked after by Sri M. Lakshmikanthan, a devotee of Bhagavan and a relative of



Sri Mallikarjunan

mine. I daily visited the Uttar Swamimalai Temple at Ramakrishnapuram and

prayed there. We also met a number of devotees in Delhi.

Next we went to Hardwar, where we stayed at the Perumal Chetty Choultry and were thrilled to

see the sacred Ganges flowing past. Our next halt was at

Rishikesh, where Sri Purushotham, the receptionist of Siva-

nanda Ashram provided accommodation for us as soon as he

saw the introductory

letter from our Ashram. We spent a few quiet days there, enjoying the bhajan and the peaceful atmosphere of the place. We visited Lakshman Jhula, Geetha Mandir, etc., across the river and returned by ferry. After looking over the Sivanandashram hospital, press, music school and temple, we left for Benares.

There, as previously arranged, we stayed at the Mysore State Guest House and were well looked after by the Manager, Sri K. M. Subba Rao, who is an ardent devotee of Sri Bhagavan and who paid a visit here with his family after

my return. We stayed there for twelve days. One day I took him with me to see Dr. S. Nath, a great devotee and a patron of our Ashram, to whom I had a letter from the Ashram President. Although a very busy doctor, he immediately received us, on seeing the letter, and arranged for a conveyance to take us to Sarnath and other places. While at the Mysore State Guest House, Sri Subba Rao and I spoke to the other guests staying there of the greatness of Sri Bhagavan and explained his teachings. There was much interest. Especially the following expressed their desire to visit our Ashram: Smt. E. Seethalakshmi, Lecturer at the Maharani's Training College at Mysore, Sri M. S. Nanjundiah, Subedar Major, HO-101, Communication, Zone Area, c/o 99 APO, and Sri A. V. Subramaniam, Bridge Inspector, Madurai.

After making puja to Lord Viswanath, we took leave and went to Allahabad and Gaya. We were overpowered by the magnitude of the Triveni Sangam. Our next stop was Calcutta. There our very dear devotee Sri V. Seshadri very kindly extended his hospitality to us and saw to our needs. He took us to all the places of spiritual interest in that great city. On our return journey we halted at Godavari and paid our respects to the sacred Godavari River.

The success of the pilgrimage was entirely due to the Grace of Bhagavan and the kindness of the Ashram President and the many devotees who showed me kindness and hospitality on the way"



*Sri S. L. Narasiah **

OBITUARY

Sujata Sen, a French lady doctor with a medical degree from the Sorbonne, married to a Bengali doctor, was one of the first foreigners to settle down here, certainly the first foreign woman. She arrived as a Buddhist from Ceylon in the mid thirties and remained here for a number of years as a devotee of Bhagavan. She was particularly susceptible to the power of Arunachala and had many strange visions and experiences. Lately she has not been in good health and has been staying with her married daughter, Monica Bose in Bombay. She died there of cancer on June 11th. May the Grace of Bhagavan protect her.

* For a note on whom see our issue for January, 1966, page 119.

INTRODUCING...

VENKATOO, the Ashram President

It looked as though the family that gave birth to Sri Ramana Maharshi would become extinct. He had two brothers, one older and one younger, and one younger sister. The elder brother died suddenly a few years after Venkataraman left home and became Sri Ramana Maharshi. The sister married but had no children. The younger brother, Nagasundaram Iyer, married and had two sons, but both of them died within a few days of birth. In distress the mother repaired to her Swami son at Arunachala, taking Nagasundaram's wife, Mangalam, with her. Sri Ramana assured them that Mangalam would have a son and sent them back. She did in 1914 but she died in the process. Under this new shock, Nagasundaram Iyer, went to Arunachala where he took sannyas under the name of Sri Niranjanananda Swami and eventually became the Sarvadhikari or controller of his brother's Ashram (as described in our *Ashram Bulletin* of Jan. 1964). The mother also went to live with Sri Ramana as one of his devotees.

The young child was brought up with love and care by Bhagavan's sister, generally known as 'Athai', meaning 'Aunt', and her husband, Sri Pichu Iyer. He was given the name of Venkataraman, and this was shortened in childhood to Venkatoo, a name which stuck and is still used by the devotees. He was brought to Tiruvannamalai two or three times a year, to see Sri Ramana, who was then living in Skandashram.

Ladies were not allowed to stay in the Ashram overnight, but Sri Ramana assured Athai that she could safely leave the child and he himself looked after him, fed him with his own hands put him to sleep, washed him and cleaned his teeth in the morning.



When Venkatoo grew up he continued living with Athai and her husband, married and had two sons and took a job in a bank in Chettinad. The even tenor of his life was interrupted in 1938 when he received a letter from the Ashram summoning him to Tiruvannamalai with his family and Athai and her husband. This meant a complete change of course, and before embarking on it Venkatoo requested V. Narayanaswamy (commonly known as Chellam Iyer, for a note on whom see our *Ashram Bulletin* of Jan. 1964) to go and find out whether the summons had the authorisation of Sri Bhagavan. When ap-

proached by him along with Sri Yogi Ramiah (for a note on whom see our *Ashram Bulletin* of April, 1964), Sri Bhagavan confirmed it. When told that Venkatoo had a family, he said: "What of that? Let him bring them too!" Thus it was not on his own initiative that Venkatoo came to the Ashram.

Sri Bhagavan would never run the Ashram administration. The spiritual and temporal sides were kept separate, the latter being in the hands of the Sarvadhikari. He did not encourage devotees to interfere in the administration or in



Venkatoo (extreme right, next to Sri Bhagavan), who representing the Ashram, inaugurated the Kumbhabhishekam ceremonies of Sri Mathrubhuteswara shrine on 17-3-1949, takes permission for the function from Sri Bhagavan.

Ashram politics. He would sometimes say to them (as reported, for instance, by Kunju Swami in his reminiscences in our issue of July, 1966): "Did you come here for Ashram politics or for Moksha? Attend to the matter for which you came." In any dispute he would support the administration on the ground that, when not actually unethical, established authority should be obeyed.

Venkatoo began to receive training as apprentice-Sarvadhikari. On several occasions when the Sarvadhikari had to go away on Ashram business he was put in charge. Bhagavan would sometimes refer people to him, saying: "Ask Venkatoo; he is the Kutti-Sarvadhikari (literally 'cub-Sarvadhikari')." He once actually stated: "He is the future Sarvadhikari; take his view also."

During Bhagavan's lifetime there was a lot of litigation due to false claims to ownership of the Ashram. Bhagavan even consented to make a deposition in the matter himself before a Commissioner appointed by the Court who was sent to the Ashram to record it. This is of philosophical as well as practical interest, as showing that Bhagavan, being, as he himself stated, '*athi-ashrami*' or 'above the stations of life', was not a sannyasi and was not therefore debarred from admitting to ownership of property.

A number of the senior devotees feared a recurrence of such trouble after Bhagavan left the body, and therefore, in 1938, a Will was drawn up. The main points of it were that the Ashram was to be maintained as a spiritual centre and that the management of it was to vest in the Sarvadhikari and, after him, Venkatoo and his



On 15-4-1950 Venkatoo leading the ceremonies of interment after Sri Bhagavan cast off his body (on 14-4-1950). He is seen performing *archana*.

descendants. Bhagavan listened carefully to the reading of it, made comments on it, and approved of it. Where a blank space had been left, he told them to write in the names of Sri Niranjanananda Swami and Sri T. N. Venkataraman (Venkatoo). He did not sign it, having no name to sign, but he drew a line at the foot of it and allowed Sri G. Sambasiva Rao (for a note on whom see our issue of Jan. 1964, *Ashram Bulletin*) to sign that he had done so in token of approval. The document was then registered and was attested by K. Sundaram Chetty (Dewan Bahadur and retired High Court Judge), M. M. Bhargava (Manager of the Reserve Bank of India in Madras), Yogi Ramiah, T. S. Rajagopala Iyer, Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami (a member of the present Board of Trustees, for whom see our *Ashram Bulletin* of Jan. 1965) and the sub-registrar, R. Narayana Iyer, all present at the time when Bhagavan signified his approval. The legality of this Will has subsequently been upheld by the District Court and the High Court. In any case, for devotees the approval of Sri Bhagavan weighs far more than recognition by a court of law.

After Bhagavan left the body, a managing committee of devotees constituted itself to help and advise in the running of the Ashram, so

that Sri Niranjanananda Swami became rather a constitutional president than the Sarvadhikari he had previously been. After his death in Jan. 1953, Venkatoo duly succeeded him as Ashram President. At first the same committee continued, but the question of Ashram administration was taken before the Madras High Court and at the beginning of 1964 a scheme was devised by which, as recorded in our *Ashram Bulletin* of April of that year, a Board of five trustees was to be in charge. Two of them were to be appointed by the Government and two by the hereditary Ashram President, who was himself to be the fifth. The President was to be a trustee for life and the other four to be appointed for a three-year term. Since the first three-year period is now terminating, this seems a good occasion to introduce the President and administration of the Ashram to our readers.

The Sarvadhikari was an austere man and apt to be brusque in manner. Venkatoo has a conciliatory manner, suitable to the changed times. He is almost always genial and good-humoured and looks younger than his 53 years. He has the rare quality of knowing his own limitations and, while personally supervising the administration, he delegates doctrinal and literary matters to

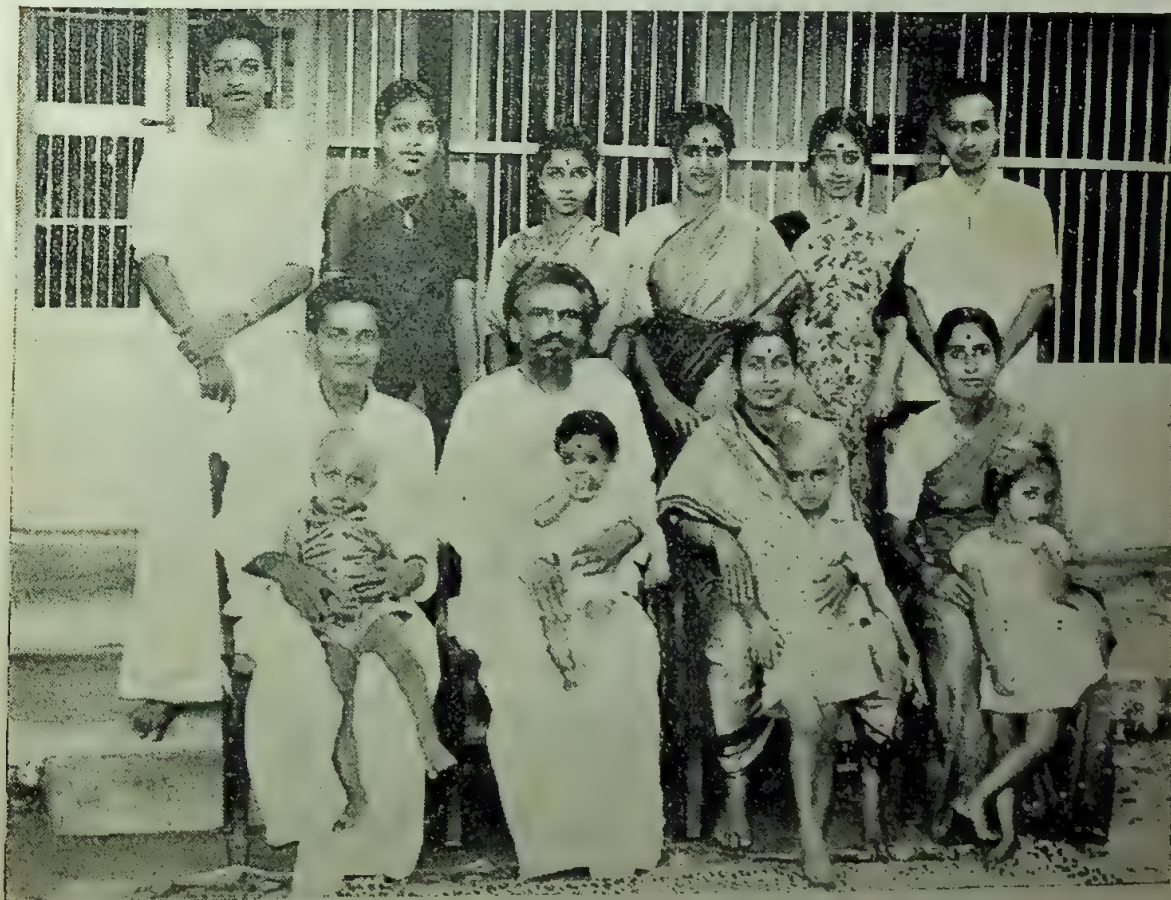
others. Like the Sarvadhikari before him, he has implicit faith in Bhagavan and confidence that this is Bhagavan's ashram and that Bhagavan will protect it.

Venkatoo has not had by any means an easy time as President. During the first part of his tenure of office he had a lot of litigation to face. Financial conditions also were difficult. When he took over, the Ashram was burdened with a debt of over Rs. 10,000. (As against this, however, one must remember that the Sarvadhikari had carried through the building of the temple and new hall which are such a distinctive feature of the Ashram.) Not only has Venkatoo succeeded in paying off the debts, but he has accumulated a considerable reserve. Most of this is in fixed deposits which he has instituted, only the interest of which is available for current use.

This state of solvency has been achieved without parsimony. In particular, a number of guest-rooms have been built in the Ashram for single

men and of guest-houses outside for ladies and families. In Bhagavan's lifetime there was only a common dormitory for men and no accommodation for women, and unless visitors could make their own arrangements outside they were normally limited to a three-day stay. There is no such restriction now. Also, the food served at the Ashram is plentiful and of high quality.

A particular tribute must be paid to Venkatoo by 'The Mountain Path'. When it was still a project in the latter part of 1963 almost every one took it for granted that it would incur a deficit and need to be subsidised. In spite of this, Venkatoo told us that we could go ahead and he would finance it out of Ashram funds. Actually, it had not been appreciated how many of the business and industrial community were devoted to Bhagavan and would give their advertisements to a journal simply because it was issued by his Ashram. Such was their sympathy and the able and devoted work of the advertisement manager with the help of a few devotees



Venkatoo, with his wife, Nagalakshmi, and his children and grandchildren.
Our Managing Editor is standing first from the left.

and friends that '*The Mountain Path*' covered its cost from the very first issue. Now the President has been repaid for his faith in it, because the fixed deposit built out of life subscriptions to it is one of those on which the Ashram's new prosperity is built.

The prosperity, however, is still quite precarious. It has not yet been sufficient to complete the building of Sri Bhagavan's samadhi. It is estimated that for the shrine alone a further sum of Rs. 25,000, will be needed, without even considering the meditation hall which it is hoped eventually to build alongside it.

While devoted to the Ashram and its affairs, Venkatoo is at the same time strongly attached to his own family. He has three sons, of whom the eldest and youngest are engineers, and four daughters, the first two of them already married. His second son, V. Ganesan, is helping him in running the Ashram. He is an M.A. in philosophy of Madras University and is the Managing Editor of '*The Mountain Path*'. As such, he combines the functions of accounts and circulation manager, advertisement editor and page-maker, all of which he performs with remarkable enthusiasm and ability.

FORTHCOMING FESTIVALS

NAVARATHRI FESTIVAL (commences on)	Friday	14-10-1966
SARASWATHI POOJA	Saturday	22-10-1966
VIJAYADASAMI	Sunday	23-10-1966
DEEPAVALI	Thursday	10-11-1966
SKANDASASHTI	Friday	18-11-1966
KARTHIGAI FESTIVAL (commences on)	Friday	18-11-1966
KARTHIGAI DEEPAM	Sunday	27-11-1966
JAYANTHI OF SRI MAHARSHI (87th Birthday)	Thursday	29-12-1966
PONGAL	Saturday	14-1-1967
CHINNASWAMI ARADHANA	Wednesday	25-1-1967
SIVARATHRI	Thursday	9-3-1967
SRI VIDYA HAVANA	Friday	17-3-1967
TELUGU NEW YEARS DAY	Monday	10-4-1967
TAMIL NEW YEARS DAY	Friday	14-4-1967

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V. GANESAN,
Managing Editor.



Many the Paths that lead
To the mountain peak
One the moon that shines
Alike on all who seek.

Anonymous Japanese verse.

TO THE EDITOR

HINDU MYSTICS

Thank you very much for your kind and generous review of 'The Way of the White Clouds'.^{*} But it saddens me to see that you think me capable of 'sniping' at Hinduism. You may not agree with my opinion or my terminology, but the word 'sniping' implies a surreptitious attack and an intention to hurt. Nothing was further from my mind. I have always shown respect and appreciation for Hinduism; in fact, in my writings, I have often gone out of my way to show how much Buddhism owes to ancient Vedic and Upanishadic tradition and how much Buddhism and Hinduism have in common. I have always insisted that even where the two systems differ, we have to acknowledge the validity of different ways and even of different aims. As I said in a previous letter to you: "I believe that every religion is a unique contribution to the spiritual life of humanity and that the more we respect this uniqueness by honestly accepting the necessary differences in form and outlook, the more we shall be able to discover the underlying harmony. Harmony, after all, is not based on sameness, but on co-operation of different forms of expression." I have used the term 'regression' in a strictly psychological sense—not as criticism but merely as an example of two different psychological methods or attitudes. The term was not invented by me but was used in the context of a quotation by the well-known psychologist Erich Fromm, and applies as much to certain Buddhist schools (as you rightly point out) as to certain Hindu schools of thought. My remark, therefore, is not caused by any prejudice against Hinduism (in fact I am far more critical about certain schools of Buddhism), but serves to clarify my own personal attitude or choice regarding two possible methods or ways of Liberation. I have not said that both these ways may not be found in Hinduism also—in fact I think that Sri Auro-

bindo comes very near to my own conception—but I merely refer to the conception of the 'average' Hindu mystic, and I might have said the average follower of Hinayana Buddhism, if I had not made my position in this respect already perfectly clear in other parts of the book.

I may add that my love and respect for Sri Ramana Maharshi (which I have often expressed in my various publications and lectures and which I have tried to instil into my Buddhist readers and audiences) is much too great to identify him with any particular school of thought or to measure him by the standards of 'average' Hindu mystics. His living presence was (and still is) a unique phenomenon and an inspiration to all religious-minded people in the world, however different their ways and methods of realization may be.

LAMA GOVINDA,
Almora.

I am glad to hear that the impression I formed of Lama Govinda's opinion of Hindu mystics was incorrect and happy to publish this rectification.

EDITOR.

PEACE OF MIND

I have a little problem. Of late I have been experiencing some (unfounded) fear of death and consequential worry as to what would happen to my large family if anything should happen to me. I fully realize that these fears and worries carry us nowhere and everything will happen as He ordains. But still the worry is there. I have been trying to overcome this by reading books on the Maharshi and by meditation. I have some relief but still I find it difficult to concentrate. I would like to have some practical suggestion as to how to meditate, how to control the mind

^{*} On page 288 of our last issue.

from wavering and get manolaya. Kindly also explain how to "observe the breath".

The Maharshi says: "Enquire, Who am I?". How is one to conduct this enquiry? Should one go on repeating the question 'Who am I?' as a mantra? Kindly give me some practical suggestions how to meditate, as I am a novice.

I had the good fortune to see the Maharshi one day in 1940, but I was too immature to understand him or draw on his unbounded Grace. All the same, I obtained employment shortly after. I fervently hope to come and reside in Sri Ramanashram after my retirement in about four years time. May He be pleased to draw me to him and give me peace of mind!

S. KRISHNASWAMY,
New Delhi.

Fear of death or a feeling of insecurity may be the reaction of the ego against meditation or any attempt to make sadhana. After all, sadhana does aim at the death of the ego. Therefore this sense of insecurity cannot be overcome by any kind of argument but only by attaining peace of mind. This can be done either by complete surrender and devotion to God or Guru or by meditation. The most direct and powerful form of meditation is Self-enquiry. This does not mean using 'Who am I?' as a mantra. Bhagavan often said that 'Who am I?' is not to be so used. It means concentrating one's mind on the sense of being, of I-am, or on pure consciousness while keeping thoughts out. Practice is needed.

Observing the breath is a simple aid to mind-control. It can be done by watching oneself breathing and counting the breaths from one to ten.

EDITOR.

DESTINY (1)

Kindly enlighten me on the following:

1. What is fate, its origin and its influence on human beings?
2. If it is the sole dictator of human life, why should one pray to God?
3. Can prayer to God eradicate fate in this life, and how, as we do not know our past and future births?
4. Why should one not surrender to fate and act as it dictates in one's life?

SARRAZ NARASIMHARAO,
Palakole.

These questions are too involved to answer briefly. Our issue of April 1967 will be mainly devoted to this subject.

EDITOR.

DESTINY (2)

In the July 1966 issue of *The Mountain Path*, Sri C. Sridhara Rao has written about effort and destiny.

Destiny and its pre-ordained nature is only for the ego, for the body. The Self is not bound by destiny. It is ever free. As long as we think we are encased in this body, we have to attempt to free ourselves from the body-consciousness and realize what we really are. We have got to disown the thought that we are the body. To achieve this, we may have to put in physical as well as mental effort.

Nature will compel each one of us to act, whether we desire to or not. Water from the great ocean evaporates only to get back to its original source through rain-drops, streams and rivers. This it does as naturally as the newborn child takes to its mother's milk. It is therefore latent in us all to start, to run in search of our own source—the SELF. We have no choice in this task. One may explain this running as a deliberate action, physical or mental.

Our effort consists in attempting to get in from without. As long as we remain in the sense-objects without, alas! it is impossible for us to be without effort. Once we surrender ourselves to the Grace, every effort thereafter is HIS. "Whatever you have to do you will be made an instrument for doing that at the right time. Do not think you cannot do it unless you have the desire to do it. Desire (or will) does not give you strength to act. The strength is the Lord's". (Bhagavan's *Sad-Darshana Bhashya*, p. xxvi) Our effort from without will help us reach only the threshold. Beyond that "it is impossible for us to make an effort". ".....the Real Self is waiting there to take you in and then whatever is done is done by something else, you have no hand in it. In this process all doubts and discussions are automatically given up....." (*Sad-Darshana Bhashya*, p. viii).

M. C. MENON,
Ramana Kendra, Delhi.

A BROAD PATH

It is with a pleasant surprise that I find that your *Mountain Path* is not a narrow one, as many ashram publications unfortunately are. It is delightful to see its columns wide open to many spiritual currents from other sides and from all faiths, as all are only the different colours in one solar spectrum.

E. VEDAVYAS,
Nellore.

APRIL

Accept my heartfelt gratitude for April. For sheer practical help to the seeker on the Path this is the best number yet. Your editorial on 'Higher Powers' is most illuminating. Apart from that, I particularly appreciate the profound common sense of Abdullah Qutbuddin and the vivid intuition of Indira Devi. I should like to know their addresses in case I feel inclined to write to them.

ALBERT STEIN,
Chicago.

Letters to Abdullah Qutbuddin can be addressed to Sri Ramanashram and will be passed on to him. The address of Indira Devi is 'Hari Krishna Mandir', Poona 16.

EDITOR.

GITA

We are enjoying the July *Mountain Path* very much, especially the editorial and the Gita translation. Please let us know whether it is intended to publish this translation in book form.

GITA SHARMA,
Madras.

Yes, the Ashram has the intention of publishing the Gita translation in book form when it is finished.

EDITOR.

PRAYER

Some time ago, while reading 'Day by Day with Bhagavan', vol. II, I came across the prayer 'Saranagati' on page 209. Since then my wife and I use it whenever we are confronted with difficulties and I assure you that we always obtain help. I think it would be to the benefit of other readers also if you would print it in *The Mountain Path*. If possible please give the musical notation also.

TIBOR and GEORGINA HALMAGYI,
Alegre, Brazil.

'Saranagati' is a very early hymn to Bhagavan composed by one of his earliest devotees, who is no longer living. Others also have found it effective as a prayer. A fairly literal translation of the words is given below, but it is not possible to give the musical notation, as Indian music does not conform to Western notation.

I surrender to Thee.

I surrender to Thee.

*Remembrance of Thee, Supreme Arunachala,
Ramana, Aruna, is Grace and gives strength.
This is the moment for Thy gracious look;
If delayed, Oh what then can I do
To avert grief and obtain joy?
Oh, I cannot bear Thy indifference, my Lord!*

-- EDITOR.

JANUARY (1)

I cannot comprehend how anyone could have not liked your big issue on Maharshi. It was and is a living treasure and always will be. What a work! What pictures!

PAUL REPS,
Hawaii.

JANUARY (2)

I particularly liked your useful remarks on page 3 of this January's issue about turning the mind inwards to the sense of being, the feeling of 'I am'. You have helped at least one aspirant by this page, which I know almost by heart. Any more personal hints would be appreciated.

MARK WILDING,
Bournemouth.

POWERS

Regarding the article on 'Fire-Walking' in the April issue there was an article some years back in 'The Illustrated Weekly of India' about Kuda Bux demonstrating it before a distinguished gathering of scientists in London. Scrapings from the soles of the feet were taken for laboratory tests before and after the fire-walking. Bux had to repeat some mantra to get into a sort of trance state. He explained that it was a case of mind overpowering matter. Swami Nikhilananda of the Ramakrishna Mission explained during a symposium at Allahabad University that a subtle energy is emitted by the body, which is impervious to fire for some time.

V. B. IYER,
Bombay.

This is certainly interesting, but, as was said in the lead-in to our article, one of the interesting features of South Indian fire-walking is that it is performed by ordinary people who are not trying to prove anything to anybody but simply manifesting their devotion.

EDITOR.

REPRINTS (1)

Thank you very much for the April *Mountain Path* some of whose precious articles I would like, with your permission, to translate into German.

I. G. SCHULTZ,
Flensburg, Germany.

REPRINTS (2)

May I have the privilege of requesting you, as a devotee of Bhagavan and also for the benefit of humanity, to permit me to make a small booklet of the article by the Maharaja of Mysore, *Sri Ramana Maharshi and the Indian Philosophic Tradition*. I thought of translating it into Tamil and circulating both the English and Tamil copies at the time of Maharshi's Jayanthi celebration next December.

N. RAMAN,
Madras-17.

REPRINTS (3)

Can I have your permission to get *Spontaneous Awakening* by Douglas E. Harding in the October 1965 *Mountain Path* reprinted in *Chetana*? I am running there a series called *Witnesses*.

MAURICE FRYDMAN,
Bombay.

Certainly. Any article from 'THE MOUNTAIN PATH' may be reprinted, though of course with acknowledgement of its source.

EDITOR.

APPRECIATION (1)

The *Mountain Path* is a great source of inspiration to me. The peace and stillness of the Ashram at the foot of Arunachala means so much to me. It seems like, a flame that burns in a silent windless place in the centre of life.

GERTRUD LIETZ,
Stuttgart, Germany.

APPRECIATION (2)

It is always a delight to peruse each *Mountain Path* and to let its spiritual flow and teachings dissolve gradually but surely the many obstacles between our present knowledge of Self and the realization of the true Self. The Maharshi's

inspiration and guidance project forcefully through the articles and editorials, and the atmosphere of Sri Ramanashram envelops us as the bliss of an ever increasing consciousness pervades our being.

ILSE and GERD LEDERMANN,
N.S.W., Australia.

NEW CONTRIBUTORS

A brief write-up in two or three lines of the authors of the articles published will help readers to have a better appreciation. 'Who says' is more important than 'what is said', is it not?

T. A. KRISHNAMURTHY,
Palghat.

We used to give a brief introductory note on new contributors but have been getting a bit slack about it. I will see to it. But do not agree that 'who says' is more important than 'what is said'. Truth is truth and rubbish rubbish, whatever name may be beneath it.

EDITOR.

REINCARNATION (1)

I liked Mr. Gubbins' article very much and am writing to tell him so. Also Sir George Trevelyan's and the Incarnate Abbot's.

I wonder whether Mr. Gubbins has read the Zohar. Its teaching of devolution down into and through three hells and then evolution, starting from the lowest of them and up through the others, past the unconsciously good angels and the consciously good archangels, reversing the course of our devolutionary descent, obviously means reincarnation for the awakening of consciousness.

ETHEL MERSTON,
Ramananagar.

REINCARNATION (2)

One or two devotees here, including myself, were quite amazed to read in your excellent July editorial the sentence "A man who dies in England to-day may be reborn in Rome at the time of Caesar." Could you please write a little more about this in clarification? Ouspensky used to stress that if no progress is made now, one may have to relive this self-same life over and over again until awakening occurs. Awful! But not much worse than the prospect of emerging, for instance, in Imperial Rome. Of course, we all

hope that we are passing beyond the possibility of such gloomy future births—the very idea of them being sufficient to spur one on to ever greater efforts! But it would be interesting to read more about the theory of it.

SARAH, F.

London.

The purpose of my remark was to show that the physical time-scale applies only to this physical life. Just as you are free from your situation in time and place in a dream, so you are in the subtle state from which you return to rebirth. Re-entering the time scale in Imperial Rome is no more gloomy a prospect than re-entering it in London to-day; after all, there have been lofty souls and debased souls in both. What is certain is that, whether in ancient Rome or modern England, whether in China or America, we re-enter the earth-life in the circumstances which the karma we have made for ourselves demands. This means that it is impossible to repeat the same life over and over again. No one remains the same throughout his life. He leaves the stage with a different load of karma from that which he brought on with him, whether better or worse, and therefore a different set of circumstances is required. Thus you will see that the subject of rebirth merges into that of destiny, which we are taking up in our next issue.

EDITOR.

REINCARNATION (3)

I read the following in a book entitled: 'The Philosophy of Compassion' by Esme Wynne-Tyson and, as it is appropriate to the July issue, thought you might like to see it too.

An interesting sidelight on this subject (reincarnation) was provided some years ago

by the result of enquiries made by Geoffrey Gorer for a book he was writing on the state of the Englishman's religion. He gained his information by means of 5,000 questionnaires taken from a large cross-section of the public and found, to his amazement, that a wholly disproportionate percentage of the population believed in reincarnation, in spite of the fact that in no Western Church, orthodox or unorthodox, was this theory taught. He wrote: "The prevalence of this belief was the most surprising single piece of information that came out of my research." In his report, quoted in 'The Observer', he added: "A minority carry this belief to the logical point of stating that human souls can pass into animals." He found it quite impossible to account for the wide acceptance of what he referred to as this 'Eastern' belief among people of the West to whom it was never taught by their spiritual pastors. But in fact it was once as widespread in the West as it is in the East, and not only was it held by those most logical of all thinkers, the ancient Greeks, centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ, but it actually survived in the Catholic Church until A.D. 553 when, at the Fifth Church Council at Constantinople, it was anathematised with other teachings of the great Alexandrian theologian Origen, at the instigation of the Emperor Justinian.

S. FARRAND,

London.

This is an interesting sidelight on the excellent article by our contributor H. S. Gubbins on 'Vestiges of Reincarnation in the West' in our issue of July 1966, and we are sure that it will interest many of our readers.

EDITOR.

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(A QUARTERLY)

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